

*In Preparation for Release in Nirvana Series - No. 1*

## **Dharma House Publications Series – IBRIC**

We are very glad to be able to deliver to you yet another release [Disk No.2] in the DH series which runs under the general caption WORD OF THE BUDDHA. This brings you seven essays on your computer, to be read leisurely in the course of the week. The lengths of these studies vary. But none is believed to be too long for a single sitting. The selection of the reading order is entirely in your hands, depending very much on your leisure and pleasure.

On the one hand, we make a definite endeavour to give a sense of direction to you as a Buddhist. As one who practices any specific [not vague] form of religion you ought not to be found groping in the dark. Moving within such a structure is both a waste of time and energy. A serious pursuit of religion requires of you something more than a mere quest or prayer for daily bread. In today's more rational thinking, some opt to call it spiritual growth. We are ourselves convinced of its validity.

These essays attempt to guide you within that framework. Each essay in itself and in their collective totality, try to trim and prune as you grow up in both your physical and mental [take it to include all in all intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions] domains. They regulate to prevent possible malformations, waste and internal decay. Indications are made with regard to the life of man with its multiple dimensions, in relation to his own inner growth, his healthy partnership with the society in which he is placed and in his more complex relationship to the vastness of the universe of which he is an integral part.

The ideal growth of man is within the totality of the universe, closely and intimately related to all its components. In Buddhist thinking, spiritual growth is integrally linked to the world of man and bird and beast. The biophilia hypothesis of today was something well known to and seriously considered by the Buddha

and his disciples. We place before you sufficient evidence from the Buddhist books in support of this thesis. As you read these essays, go back now and again deep into the world of nature and try to share that warmth of feeling as enjoyed by the early Buddhist disciples in their own spiritual escalation.

Do not miss our primary request to you. You should always be adequately sensitized to the constant need of self-detection, self-analysis and self-correction. We do hope this disk would be an unfailing companion in your regular and dedicated spiritual quest.

If and when you need to inquire about any points of doctrine arising out of this disk please do not hesitate to contact us at the address given below.

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## A Correct Vision & A Life Sublime

**Ven. Professor Dhammavihari**

Venerable Dhammavihari was better known in the world of Buddhist scholarship as Professor Jotiya Dhirasekera until his ordination as a member of the Buddhist Sangha on 18th May 1990. Starting his career as a teacher of Pali and Buddhism at the University of Ceylon, Colombo in 1946 he was attached to the University of Peradeniya till 1969. Thereafter he was appointed Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto in Canada. Returning to Sri Lanka in 1972 he taught at the Universities of Sri Jayewardenepura and

Kelaniya at postgraduate level. As Editor - in - Chief of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, he introduced many vibrant changes (See Vol. IV Fascicle 1). Appointed Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, he completely re-established the institute both in terms of its physical structure and its academic content. He moved it from Kelaniya to its metropolitan setting and threw open its doors to students of all disciplines, arts, science, medicine, engineering and law, teaching all courses in both media of English and Sinhala. It was his delight to see Buddhist and non-Buddhist students, both clergy and laity, seriously engaged in research, with a rare relish, in the field of Buddhism. Confident of its future success, he retired in 1987 at the age of sixty six.

His *magnum opus* is Buddhist Monastic Discipline, published in the Ministry of Higher Education Research Publication Series, Sri Lanka, 1982.

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A Correct Vision & A Life Sublime

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### **Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma Sambuddhassa**

Adoration to my Buddha, The Glorious, The Worthy, The Fully Enlightened One  
To the cherished memory of Athandra Deepanie - a dear daughter and a loving  
sister

this little gift of the dhamma is offered for the futhherance of her pursuit of the

## goal of Nibbana

Released on the occasion of the upasampada of Venerable Dhammavihari on 21.12.1990

W.K.Premaratna, Matilda Premaratna

and Anuja Premaratna

father, mother and brother

and Priyanka Jayawardhana

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## Preface

This little booklet consists of a selection of talks on Buddhism given by me over the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation and a few articles published in journals here and abroad, spreading over a period of nearly twenty years. Most of them have been rearranged and considerably enlarged, keeping in mind the needs of the day. It has been my endeavour all my life to present Buddhism as a living reality which enriches human life to an unimaginable degree. This is what Buddhism really is. It is this enrichment aspect of Buddhism, namely *bhāvanā* or the culture and nurture of the human mortal through the multiple process of *sikkhā*, viz. moral rectitude[*sīla*], acquisition of purity of mind and thereby power

over it [*samādhī*] and consequent gaining of wisdom with regard to the real nature of the world we live in [*paññā*] which gives every down-to-earth human being or *lokiya puthujjana* his own right of transcendence over all that is earthly, good and bad, to become *lokuttara* or supra-mundane or supremely above the mundane.

It is to be understood and appreciated whether we speak in terms of progress, culture or achievements, the Buddhists cannot, without thoroughly deluding themselves, look for anything divorced from these or anything which contradicts these. Such a perfection of man acquired through this threefold culture of *tisso sikkhā* is truly an achievement greater than the conquest of space. For it is this very process of the journey which every Buddhist has to undertake which makes the world around us a better place to live in. It is well worth a trial.

Thus as every space shuttle, whether to the moon or to Mars or Jupiter, has first to get off the launching pad, it would be noted that these essays have a singleness of purpose, and earnest endeavour to get the correctness of direction and the ideal conditions prior to the launching. Let us know what exactly we have to do, religion-wise as Buddhists, and let us also ask ourselves whether we are all ready for it. Everybody knows how work goes on at NASA and the discipline behind it. If a job of work has to be done, one must get down to it, no matter what it costs in terms of money, time or labour, not to talk of name and fame and pomp.

The essays in this collection are not meant to be read like chapters in a thesis, with a continuity from one to the other. Read each one, as it were independent of the other, gaining total vision through each one. Then a point of convergence will emerge and you cannot miss it. It is earnestly hoped that our readers would make an honest attempt to familiarise themselves, sooner or later, with Buddhist texts, closer to the originals as far as possible. Their balmy freshness is to be felt. Incorporation of Pali quotations in their original form has

been at times unavoidable and indispensable for this reason. They alone can provide that vitality and vibrancy to the word of the Buddha. This is really delivering the *Buddhavacana* in Caesarean style and therefore without any contamination and consequent lowering of quality which are inevitable in the process of delivering through translations.

Let me conclude expressing my deep sense of gratitude to Mr. W. K. Premaratna who sponsors the publication, Mr. D.C. Ranatunga and Mr. B. N. Jayawardhana, who helped me at all stages in the preparation of the manuscript for the printer, all of whom I have known since their days at the University in Peradeniya in the early fifties. These are the enduring joys of a guru who has been able to look upon his pupils with paternal affection.

With a firm conviction I wish to add that Mr. Ariya Wickrama and the staff of Lanka Printing and Packaging Co. Pvt. Ltd., the printers, deserve a special word of thanks for the keenness and devotion with which this manual of the dhamma has been so excellently brought out.

Dhammavihari. / 5th November 1990

Vajirarama Aranya , Bowalawatta , Kandy.

## (1) From Samsāra to Nibbāna

### - The goal of religion in Buddhism

-

First of all, let us identify the goal of Buddhism as a religion. There is no mistaking about it. [There is very little need to foolishly waste our time debating over whether Buddhism is a religion or a philosophy.] It is undeniably the termination at the earliest opportunity of the process of rolling on in *samsāra* [...*ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthatthaṃ paññāpanāya* DN.II.63f.]. This in turn is called *vaṭṭūpaccheda* at AN.II.34] or termination of the rolling on of the wheel of

life where the incessant interplay of name and form [*nāma-rūpa* and *viññāṇa*] ceases. [For further details see the above two references.] Every effort at religious or spiritual growth in Buddhism must be geared to this.

It has also to be admitted that this striving for release from *saṃsāra* must be operated from the human plane. This is why the slipping off of an individual from the human state into a lower degenerate existence is always referred to as *niraya*, *apāya*, *vinipāta* etc. They all mean slipping off from, degenerate into and deteriorate. These are states in which one is expected to purge oneself of the defilements or ill-effects [*paṭisaṃvedetī*] which one has gathered round oneself in the incorrect process of living in the world. We hear of beings in such states said to be always praying to be born as humans and promising to lead a good life on their return there.

They say:

*So hi nūna ito gantvā yoniṃ laddhāna mānusiṃ  
vadaññū sīlasaṃpanno kāhāmi kusalaṃ bahuṃ.* [Pv. v. 805]

This is a pointed reference to the value of **human life** as a launching pad from which to commence one's spiritual ascent. It may be stated with 100% accuracy that whatever one does towards the attainment of one's salvation, they are invariably tied up with human existence and the life process in the world. While the normal run of the life process leads to prolongation of *saṃsāra*, a correct and regulated life process leads to its reduction and termination. Life in the world and religious aspirations have thus to be integrated into a harmonious whole. What one attempts to do in the name of religion towards the attainment of the goal of salvation cannot be apart from our process of living. It has to **be a part of it**. This is why we would choose to call the statement 'the lonely road to Nirvana', often made by uniformed and uninitiated persons, to be a wild generalization. It is far from being lonely. It is even much worse when somebody says of the Buddhists that 'They can no longer exclude the social dimension from

their system.'

These misconceptions regarding the social concern of Buddhism as a religion have well and truly originated from an ignorance of the religion as a whole both by Buddhists and non-Buddhists. For the critics come from both quarters. This is why we have the need today, more than ever before, to re-read our Buddhist texts, understand the full import of the religion and re-regulate our religious life in a meaningful way.

Life of man in the world, if he is also heedful of his religion, can be brought under three broad categories, namely social, economic and religious. Man's position in the world in relation to other human beings, both immediately connected or remotely related, is one that needs to be carefully determined, to ensure that the human complex works without friction and with perfect ease and efficiency. Human nature being what it is, the ego tends to dominate at every turn and self-interest can work to the detriment of those around. Likes and dislikes in life, attraction and repulsion are the outcome of this. When these get beyond manageable limits there is violence, crime and unrest in society. This, nobody likes. This is a universal truth : *sukha + kāmā* = people like comfort and happiness and they are *dukkha + paṭikkūlā* = averse to discomfort and grief. Whether it is pain of mind or pain of body, nobody ever likes it [See MN.I.341].

This in Buddhism is the basis of its social philosophy. When this is pushed to its transcendental heights it is also the basis of its religious philosophy. For *nibbāna* is happiness or *sukha* supreme : *nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukham*. With these preliminary remarks in mind, now let us turn to a sutta like the Parābhava. The word *parābhava* means decline, degeneration or deterioration. When we analyze the sutta carefully, we discover that the decline discussed in this sutta pertains mainly to the social and economic spheres of life of the man in the world. The opposite of this idea of decline, namely development, is expressed in the sutta by the term *bhavaṃ*. The idea of development and growth implied in *bhavaṃ* is seen reaching as far as *bhāvanā*. For *bhāvanā* is essentially growth of



character, morally and intellectually.

This same interest for the social and economic development of man in society is witnessed throughout Buddhist texts. *Vasala Sutta* is another very good example of this. In an honest attempt to foster such growth, the *Parābhava Sutta* carefully highlights the areas of decline and attempts to arrest such decay. We have time and again stressed that Buddhist ethics are set up on the bed-rock of respect for life and respect for property and possessions of others. This is because, as far as we are concerned, this is what we also would like others to respect. We take ourselves as an example and behave towards others on that principle. This is the principle of self-example or *attūpamāya* [*atta* : self + *upamā* : example]. This is impregnated in the concept of *attūpanāyika dhammapariyāya* or moral instructions which proceed on the self-stand basis.

As a basic universally extensive ethic, the *pañca-sīla* is upheld by the Buddhists for this reason. Regional barriers and political boundaries are disregarded in the promulgation of the *pañca-sīla* by the Cakkavatti King in Buddhism. Man must be man, and be full of humanitarian considerations, whatever his politics, and his ethnic or religious differences be. Moral reorganizing and not political restructuring is the Buddhist theme. This is why the Cakkavatti begins with the *pañca-sīla* : *pāṇo na hantabbo* [i.e. no life should be destroyed] etc. and ends up by telling his vassals in unmistakable terms 'to carry on as before' : *yathā-bhuttañ ca bhuñjatha* in the administration of the kingdom.[See DN.III.62].

From this universal ethic we see what might also be called a regional Buddhist ethic emerging. It is certainly no narrowing process leading to exclusion, but one of being specific for better enforcement. The **general principle of respect for life** is seen developing in a new direction, bringing within its fold a principle of respect for persons in view of their maturity and social position. This one of interpersonal relationship accepts the principle of leadership and seniority [*vuddhāpacāyana*] in the human community. Thus the respect for religious men,

parents and elders in the family by the rest of the membership did not appear offensive to the Indian mind. We believe there is a grossly mistaken belief in the minds of many that western culture leaves room for an ambivalence in this region. We do not subscribe to this.

On the other hand, a *primus inter pares* or seniority in the midst of equals was accepted. It was the fulfillment of a social contract. This we should be able to see in the Parābhava, Vasala and Maṅgala suttas of the Suttanipāta [Sn. vv. 91-114, 116 -142, 258 -269 respectively] and also in the *satta aparihāniyā dhammā* [or virtues that arrest social decay] of the Vajjis [See DN.II.73f.]. The perfect development of this attitude, made highly domestic, is seen in the idea of saluting the six directions as admonished by the Buddha to young Sigāla as a home-dweller [*kule gihī*] in the Sigāla Sutta [DN.III.191 f.].

This virtue of respecting clan-elders [*kule jeṭṭhāpacāyana*], each within its own clan grouping, looms large in the Buddhist horizon [See DN.III.72-74 for further details of this. See also MN.III.179]. The Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta, in this context, refers to epochs in human history when this virtue waxes and wanes, and associates it with periods of human development and degeneracy in general. The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, while enunciating the seven factors which arrest socio-political decay [i.e. *satta aparihāniyā dhammā* of the Vajjis] specifically stresses the respect for the elders of the community, adding that due attention be paid to the counsel they can offer : *Yā vakīvañ ca Ānanda Vajjī ye te Vajjīnaṃ Vajjimahallakā te sakkarissanti garukarissanti mānessanti pūjessanti tesañ ca sotabbaṃ maññissanti vuddhi yeva Ānanda Vajjīnaṃ pāṭikaṅkā no parihāni* [DN.II.74].

While this forms the broader base of the pyramid of ethical culture in this specific area, the Sigāla Sutta picks it up at the narrower end of the single family unit and talks in terms of parents and children [DN.III.189]. With a reciprocal responsibility, the Sutta states five conditions each for both groups and insists on their fulfillment for the healthy growth of community life. Feeling as it were that

this mild and persuasive didacticism of the Sigāla Sutta is unequal to the task, the Vasala and Parābhava Suttas take up this cause and address the miscreants who neglect their duty by their parents in terms which would be called both caustic [Vasala] and incisive [Parābhava]. In no uncertain terms, the Vasala Sutta [Sn. v. 124] calls such a defaulter an outcast or *Vasala*, i.e. a *pariah*, while the Parābhava Sutta [Sn. v. 98] strikes the warning that such behavior definitely leads to one's decline and deterioration : *taṃ parābhavato mukhaṃ*.

Likewise the respect for others' property is seen developing, not only in relation to material possessions, but also in relation to the personal composition of the family, like the wife and the husband and the children in relation to one another. Thus there emerge very specific injunctions with regard to conjugal fidelity, pre-marital sex relations etc. Here too, one discovers a collective attempt made in the Buddhist texts to consolidate these virtues in society. Picking up this virtue of conjugal fidelity as the basis of domestic solidarity, the Vasala Sutta [Sn. v. 123] assails its violation very comprehensively, ruling out both compulsion and connivance [*sahasā sampiyena vā*] as grounds for its commission. Parābhava Sutta [Sn. v.103] frowns upon looseness of sexual behavior on grounds of incontinence and insatiability [*Sehi dārehi asantuṭṭho*].

It should now be clear from what has been indicated so far under the caption 'From Samsāra to Nibbāna' that the goal of Buddhism as a religion is unquestionably a transcendental one. Admittedly it is so in all religions. But Buddhism has its uniqueness here on two specific grounds. To the Buddhist, this life from birth to death is only a single frame in an infinitely long film strip. Therefore the correction and improvement in the first is of primary importance for those that follow, the second and the third etc. The risk of error and breakdown is minimal if the correction is made here and now, while one is alive. The second consideration is that this correction is solely and entirely the burden of the individual. It is his judgement, it is his will and it is his endeavor [*ditṭhi chanda viriya*].

It is his personal responsibility [*attanā ' va kataṃ pāpaṃ* or *attanā akataṃ pāpaṃ*] as the Dhammapada precisely puts it [at Dh. v. 165] that gains him his purity for his transcendence, for his attainment of the religious goal. Our endeavor was to show that **the Buddhist has to live the life into which he is born, well and truly in the Buddhist way, to transcend it.** This process of religious living makes this life immensely richer by whatever sensible yardstick one measures it and makes it considerably useful for the peace and prosperity of the world around him. This concept of true Nibbānic aspiration and its correct method of achievement, one must not lose sight of.

Thus, in the first stage of the journey to Nibbāna, *sīla*, i.e. moral rectitude or good ethical living appears to be the most reliable carrier.

## (2) Nature

### The cradle of human culture

In this essay let us talk about the Buddhist attitude to nature. By nature we mean here the natural environment of man, including fauna and flora as well as the rivers, lakes, forests and mountains. We in the east have a special way of feeling about nature. This is particularly so of the Buddhists. The Buddhists, in their escalation up the ladder of religious accomplishment, finally have to meet at a stage of not differentiating materially between man and the world around him. Bring to mind here the aspiration of Thera Tālapuṭa who expresses this idea as follows.

*Kadā nu kaṭṭhe ca tiṇe latā ca khandhe ime 'ham amite ca dhamme  
Ajjhattikān' eva ca bāhirāni samaṃ tuleyyaṃ tadidaṃ kadā me.*

Thag. v. 1101

When would I look upon the dry wood, grass and the creepers  
and the infinite constituents like the aggregates that make up my body,  
all those both within and without, as being all the same.

When will that position ever be mine?

[Translated by the author]

This is Thera Tālapuṭa's wish, living in the jungle as he did, to see no difference between the composition of his own being and the material things of the world like grass, dry wood and creepers around. One thus gets naturally merged in the world in which one exists. There could then be no over-inflation of an ego which expands and spreads devastatingly over every other thing around.

We would do well now to begin by quoting a revered Japanese Buddhist scholar, the late Professor D.T. Suzuki, on this subject.

He says:

' First of all, Basho was a nature poet, as most of the Oriental poets are. They love nature so much that they feel one with nature. They feel every pulse beating through the veins of nature. Most Westerners are apt to alienate themselves from nature. They think man and nature have nothing in common except in some desirable aspects, and that nature exists only to be utilized by man. But to Eastern people nature is very close.'

Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis. p.2

But today it is lamentable to note that through the ruthless inroads of industrialization and mechanization, and the disastrous technological appendages that come along with them, this very virtue of the Eastern world is rapidly getting eroded and denuded.

Let me now begin with the Buddhist attitude to the forest as an integral part of the world we live in. It does not exist as a region unknown to man or avoided by him. It is no doubt spatially away from the town, the normal habitat of man. But what it can offer materially and offer for the benefit of the mind, are all too well known to man. Thus in this setting, man was appreciating the benefits he

was constantly deriving from nature around him. So he deemed it his duty and responsibility not to damage it or deplete it of its richness. It is treacherous, says Buddhist thinking, to break the branches of a tree under whose shade one sits or sleeps. The ethics of this injunction appears to have been widely accepted in the Indian society of the day. In the Buddhist Jataka collection the following verse appears in six different places, independent of one another [Jātaka Pāli vv. 1503, 2129, 3478, 4329, 5713, 5851]. We find this idea picked up again in the Petavatthu and the verse is uttered as an ethical injunction, forbidding treachery towards a person who is one's friend [Pv. v. 259].

*Yassa rukkhassa chāyāya nisīdeyya sayeyya vā  
Na tassa sākhā bhañjeyya mittadubbho hi pāpako.*

Wherever a man sits or sleeps under the shade of a branch of a tree,  
let him not break its branches. Such treachery is evil indeed.

[Translated by the author]

This affinity of man to the forest and the warmth of his relationship to it is clearly evident from the records in Buddhist texts of planted man-made forests [*ropita-vana*] like the Jetavana in Sāvatti which was planted and maintained by Prince Jeta [*Jetassa vanaṃ Jetavanaṃ. Taṃ hi Jetena rājakumārena ropitaṃ samvaḍḍhitaṃ paripālitaṃ. So ca tassa sāmī ahoṣi. Tasmā Jetavanān 'ti vuccati.* MA. I. 60]. In the vicinity of Vesālī, there was its own natural forest belt [*jāta-vana*], coming down from the Himalayan range [*Mahāvane 'ti bahinagare Himavantena saddhiṃ ekābaddhaṃ hutvā thitaṃ sayāṃ jātavanaṃ atthi. Taṃ mahantabhāvena mahāvanān 'ti vuccati.* DA. I. 309].

Apparently forest-culture was part and parcel of Indian culture of the day. They had realized the indispensability of the forest for the enrichment of human culture. Therefore the culture or growing and grooming of forests [*vana-ropa*] was listed high among the good deeds of men which entitle them to a much-wished-for birth in the heavenly worlds [*ārāma-ropā vana-ropā ..... te janā saggagāmino*

SN.I. 33]. It's attractions are often the envy of the town dweller, particularly of those who are sensitively conscious of the corroding effects, both physical and mental, of urban culture.

The practice and growth of religious life in Buddhism, mainly its aspect of mind culture, is very intimately and closely tied up with residence in the forest. ` Gone to the forest or gone to the foot of a tree ' - *arañña-gato vā rukkhamūla-gato vā* - is a recurrent statement in Buddhist texts which deal with admonitions to monks who are intent on mind culture. The Girimānanda Sutta [AN.V.108 ff.] is one of the finest examples of this. Six out of the ten items of mind culture or *dasa-saññā* here refer to the forest dwelling monks. It is also extremely refreshing to note that some of the loveliest rendezvous in Buddhist *sāsana* history between the Buddha and some of his disciples or between some of the most outstanding disciples of the *sāsana* have taken place in sylvan retreats. *Sāsana*-history-wise, the staggering meeting between the Venerable Sariputta and the Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāniputta took place in the depths of the forest called Andhavana in the vicinity of Savatthi. For the sheer love of meeting these two noble personalities of rare distinction one must read this account of the dialogue in the Rathavinīta Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.I. 146-151].

Equally touching is the story of the Buddha's endeavor which enabled his young son Rahula to attain *arahanthood*. It is said that the Buddha, knowing the spiritual maturity and the readiness of young Rahula to attain *arahanthood* [*paripakkhā kho Rāhulassa vimutti-paripācanīyā dhammā* - MN.II. 77 and SN.IV. 105], after concluding his alms-round at Savatthi, invited Rahula to join him to spend the rest of the day in the Andhavana forest. It is at this meeting, in the serenity of this forest grove, that the Buddha led his son to the attainment of the goal of Nibbana, through a gradual process of instructions through questioning [*imasmiṃ kho pana veyyākaraṇasmim bhaññamāne āyasmato Rāhulassa anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ vimuccā*].

It is repeatedly stated that the Buddha held the forest as a charming,

attractive place. 'Let me alone to the forest resort, the place much praised by the Buddha,' says Thera Ekavihāriya [*Handa eko gamissāmi araññaṃ buddha-vaṇṇitaṃ*. Thag. v. 537]. Its solitude is obviously its main attraction : *phāsuṃ ekavihārissa*. This, of course, is a positive virtue of a negative quality. But the more one tries to adjust oneself to the environment, one is drawn closer to the forest by its virtues. Wild life in the jungle is something that thrills the man of cultivated taste. He does not need to level down everything around him in order to get himself into harmony with his environment. Instead, he integrates himself sensibly with the rest of his environment, giving each its own place. Thus the infuriated free-roaming elephant of the wild is legitimately a source of delight: *yogipītikaraṃ rammaṃ matta-kuñjara-sevitaṃ* [Thag. v. 539]. It is said to delight the mind of the *yogin*, the ardent pursuer of the religious way.

There being the possibility of utilizing every aspect of the natural environment as a source of joy and inspiration, we see the forest-dwelling sage commenting on the flora as well. He sees the beauty of the forest in bloom, he senses the cooling power of mountain streams in the forest and he notes with joy and satisfaction the aroma in the refreshing breeze:

*mālute upavāyante sīte surabhiḡandhake.*

This often appears to be the appropriate atmosphere most conducive to spiritual uplift. For this same Thera Ekavihāriya whose favorable reactions to his environment we have already noticed, tells us that perched on a mountain top there he would finally tear asunder the veil of ignorance which keeps him out of reach of the spiritual goal :

*avijjaṃ dālayissāmi nisinno nagamuddhani*

Thag. v. 544

Another thera by the name of Saṅkicca, showing us the charm of the forest, says:

Crags where clear waters lie, a rocky world,



Haunted by black-faced apes and timid deer,  
 Where cloaked in watery moss the rocks stand  
 Those are the highlands of my heart's delight.  
 I 've dwelt in forests and in mountain caves  
 In rocky gorges and haunts remote,  
 And where the creatures of the wild do roam.

Ps B. ⅴ. 601-602

What is revealed here by Thera Saṅkicca [who we are told was young in years at this stage], with regard to the psychology of the forest-dwelling monk is extremely interesting. The forest-dweller is constantly in the midst of wild and ferocious beasts [*vālamiga-nisevita*] who strike fear into the heart. But the monk's reaction is not one of aggressive challenge. As Thera Saṅkicca says, it is an attempt to adjust and accommodate oneself to the real situation. In such an atmosphere, hostility is the last thing to show itself up. To let such thoughts arise is indeed looked upon as being vulgar [*anariya*]. He says I do not recollect any such evil wishes as 'may these beings perish, may they be destroyed or may they suffer pain and anguish.'

*Ime haññantu vajjhantu dukkhaṃ pappontu pāṇino*  
*Saṅkappaṃ nābhijānāmi anariyaṃ dosasamhitāṃ.*

Thag. v. 603

May these beings perish, and suffer destruction.  
 May they suffer pain. I do not recollect having  
 entertained any such vicious and vulgar thoughts.

[Translated by the author]

It is astonishing to note here the circumstances which set in motion the line of thinking which prompted this young *thera* to be thus awakened and pursue his argument in this manner. It is the ill-omened black raven of the charnel-ground who signaled to him the grim reminder about death and the triviality of life which led him to a true spirit of detachment [Thag. ⅴ. 599]. And this in turn led him to

infer that detachment leads to a delightful state of ease and happiness [Thag. v. 600]. Pursue here a young mind like that of Thera Saṅkicca acquiring such dignified detachment to leave behind, without batting an eye lid, a world in which one has been accustomed to live. Here are Saṅkicca's own words in their original.

*Yañ ca aññe na rakkhanti yo ca aññe na rakkhati  
Sa ' ve bhikkhu sukhaṃ seti kāmesu anapekkhavā.*

Ibid. v. 600

Here we correct the translation in the Psalms of the Brethren [v. 600] and offer this new translation.

He whom others do not guard,  
And he too who hath none other to guard,  
Such a *bhikkhu* dwells in happy ease.  
For on gratifying his senses,  
He's not set his heart.

It is also indicated in the Buddhist texts that the beauty of the forest does not always come within the grasp of the average person [*Ramanīyāni araññāni yattha na ramati jano*. Thag. v. 992 = Delightful indeed are the forests wherein the average man of the world [*jano*] finds no source of joy.]. It requires a cultivated outlook to behold the beauty therein : *vītarāgā ramissantī na te kāmagavesino* [loc.cit.]. For the **Enlightened Ones** are **not seekers after lustful pleasures**.

The engrossment in the raw worldly pleasures screens its beauty away from the worldling. Here are vivid examples of the new realms of beauty which can be viewed only through new vantage points. The upland glades through which the trumpeting of elephants reverberates holds out a special attraction to Thera Mahā Kassapa: *Kuñjarābhirudā rammā te selā ramayanti maṃ* [Thag. v.1062].

This is in the same refrain of Thera Ekavihāriya quoted above [Thag. v. 539].

Among the attractions which please him and of which he eloquently speaks are :

Rocky heights with hue of dark blue clouds  
 Where lies embosomed many a shining tarn  
 Of crystal-clear cool waters, and whose slopes  
 The herds of Indra cover and bedeck. Ps. B. v. 1063

He is equally sensitive to the  
 Fair uplands, rain refreshed and resonant  
 With crested creatures' cries antiphonal,  
 Lone heights where silent Rishis oft resort. Ps. B. v. 1065

An aesthetic sensitivity as well as an artistic temperament can equally well respond to the call of these which appear to be remotely beautiful things. It is no mean artist who describes a mountain in the following style.

Clad with the azure bloom of flax, blue-flecked  
 As sky in autumn; quick with crowds  
 Of all their varied winged populace:  
 Such are the braes wherein my soul delights. Ps. B. v. 1068

To one who has acquired the capacity to look upon his environment with this new richness, life in the forest, with its unique solitude [*anākiṇṇā gahaṭṭhehi*] is far from distressing [*Te selā ramayanti maṃ*. Thag. v. 1069 = Those rocks give me great delight.]. Such a one longs for it. Thera Mahā Kassapa's is a telescopic view of the world, seeing many things of beauty which an average naked eye could never see. It is then not surprising when he says that his new penetrative vision of the dhamma [*sammā dhammaṃ vipassato*] gives him far greater joy than does the music of the best orchestration in the land.

*Na pañcaṅgikena turiyena rati me hoti tādīsī.*

Thag. v. 1071

To the common man of the world [*puthujjana*] such a stage is **an unrealized reality of a world** which nevertheless **does truly exist**.

In a similar strain, Thera Tālapuṭa is seen here reaching out for it.

When shall I come to dwell in mountain caves  
 Now here, now there, unmated [with desire]  
 And with the vision gained  
 Into impermanence. Ps .B. v. 1091

The new vision which he is longing here for is *aniccato sabbabhavaṃ vipassaṃ* which the Commentary exhaustively explains as `the ability to view all forms of existence, i.e. *kāma-*, *rūpa-* and *arūpa-* *bhavas* in terms of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anatta*.' In such a life there are new thrills and new adventures.

O when will [break above my head]  
 The purple storm-cloud of the rains,  
 And with fresh torrents drench my raiment in the woods,  
 Yea, when shall this thing come to be ?

Ps. B. v. 1102

The secret of this miracle is that a true disciple, instead of being enslaved by the mind, brings the mind under his own command. The key to this success is his spirit of contentment. Thus Thera Tālapuṭa sings with an admirable depth of conviction.

Thus will I do even as a master should.  
 Whatever is got, be it enough for me.  
 I'll lead thee in my power by force of will,  
 Like a fierce elephant by skilled mahout.

Ps. B. v. 1139

There is undeniably something unusual in this approach to happiness. But this non-conformity in itself has no stigma. It can indeed have a therapeutic effect. Watch this same Thera Tālapuṭa picking up the cry of the peacock in the woods and using it as a clarion call which summons him to spiritual mustering. His own words are as follows:

O when shall I, hearing the call adown the woods  
 Of crested, twice-born peacock [as I lie at rest]  
 within the bosom of the hill,  
 Arise and summon thought and will  
 To win the' Ambrosial --  
 Yea, when shall this come to be? Ps. B. v. 1103

It is also evident from the words of Thera Tālapuṭa that this kind of forest-dwelling, or rather shall we say forest-loving person acquires the skill to charge with new life and meaning even the commonplace and neglected things in nature. It is an artistic ingenuity of re-integration and re-interpretation. See the poet, artist and philosopher in Tālapuṭa from what he says below:

On fastness of the crag  
 Bright-plumaged passengers of air,  
 Greeting great Indra's thunder with their cries,  
 Do give him joy who ponders in the wood.  
 Ps. B. v. 1108

Is it not an inspiring alliance that is suggested here, between the animate and the inanimate, between peals of thunder and the re-echoing cries of the birds of the forest. This magnanimous and sympathetic understanding of the world we live in and the contents thereof must become the core of Buddhist life.

It is as though the Buddhist cannot and cannot afford to look at life differently. Note the recurrence of this idea in a slightly different form in the following.

Fair-plumed, fair-crested passengers of air  
 With deep and many hued wing,  
 Give greeting to the muttering thunder cloud  
 With cries melodious, manifold; 'tis they  
 Will give thee joy whilst thou art musing there. Ps. B. v. 1136

Exploring the depths of the forest, the man of vision finds that joy is not far to seek. It is perhaps for this reason that many countries in the world which can boast of a high level of culture have thought it fit to have forests or semblance of a forest within the reach of their city life. Parks and sanctuaries in miniature [*bois* and woods] provide these. More and more home gardens now come to be laid with this end in view. With a reassuring tone a Buddhist disciple tells us:

O [Thou will love the life], be it on crest  
 Of caverned cliffs, where herd boar and gazelle,  
 Or in fair open glade, or in the depths  
 Of forest freshened by new rain - 'tis there  
 Lies joy for thee to cavern-cottage gone. Ps. B. v. 1135

Finally, in the patronage offered by the forest by its fauna and flora, not only in their mild form, but even by the fierce and the wild, one begins to find great comfort and confidence. Such is the triumph of *bhāvanā* which is none other than the culture of human attitudes in the direction of successful self-correction. Thera Tālapuṭa is once again full of conviction when he says:

There in the jungle ringing with the cries  
 Of peacock and of heron wilt thou dwell  
 By panthers and tigers owned as chief. Ps. B. v. 1113

To live like this, to live with this orientation, is a training that one goes through in the process. It appears totally rigorous and ascetic, but it is a training

that suitably and subtly qualifies one for flights into spiritual heights. Tālapuṭa was confident of what one could attain through such training and he fittingly concludes his stanza by adding

And for thy body cast off care;

Miss not thine hour, thine aim ! Ps. B. v. 1113

*Kāye apekkhaṃ jaha mā virādhaye.* Thag. v. 1113

Compare this line with the Buddha's succinct admonition to the aged Thera Pingiya who was anxiously looking out for the conquest of ills of life, of birth and decay [*jāti-jarāya idha vipphānaṃ* at Sn. v. 1120 ff.].

Discard thy body [i.e. the attachment to the body]

In order that

You may not be

Born again and again.

*Jahassu rūpaṃ apunabbhavāya.*

Sn. v.

To be able to do this is undeniably to the Buddhists the peak of cultural accomplishment which is attainable by the humans.

### (3) In Harmony

To be in harmony with the world around us, both with the animate and the inanimate, is one of the principles advocated in Buddhism, in order that man may attain his fullest development within himself and also secure for himself the maximum degree of success and happiness in life in the world outside. And this latter, Buddhism insists, without violence to anyone or anything, and at the same time fostering peace on earth and goodwill among men. This literally requires

man to live within the framework of *dharma* [or the ethic of living], such living being called *dhammacariyā* and *samacariyā* [i.e. harmonious living]. Those who practice such a way are called *dhammaṭṭhā* or *dhamma*-dwellers. This principle primarily derives its authority from the recognition of the philosophy of mutual interdependence in the universe, i.e. the recognition of the diverse relations that exist both in the physical as well as the psychical world. This relates to the origin and to the peaceful and harmonious continuance of what we conventionally regard as life, states or things.

Thus life on earth, taking into consideration even the wide concept of the universe, has to be a co-operative process, based on the principle of inter-relatedness, not only of mutual assistance but also of mutual non-interruption and non-interference, in order that serious imbalances and consequent destruction might not be brought about. This should virtually apply to all areas of religion, ethnicity and politics. The scientists of the world today emphatically announce the disastrous movement of man in the direction of destroying [admittedly unwittingly though at times], the biota of the world we live in. Note :

" The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.

Although oft cited and reported, the scale of the unfolding catastrophic loss of many and varied ecosystems through human activity is still only dimly perceived, for the link between the degradation of the biota and the diminishment of the human prospect is poorly understood."

[The Biophilia Hypothesis Edited by Stephen R.Kellart and Edward O. Wilson, Island Press, 1993 , p.4]

This philosophy of amity or friendship [i.e. *mettā* or *maitrī*] which is fully enunciated in the Metta Sutta of the Buddhists [Sn. vv. 143-152 and Khp. p.8f.],



brings within its fold all grades of life, man and bird and beast, no matter how large or small they are. Seen or unseen, near or far, all life is encompassed within thoughts of loving kindness. In displeasure or in ill-will, one shall not long for or pray for the destruction of another. With more or less maternal affection, one is called upon to look at life in the universe. This attitude is expected to pervade all areas of Buddhist life, both religious and secular.

To begin with, it is worth noting that in terms of life in society as against that of the monk in the cloister, the Buddhist ruler is called upon to provide peace and security, free from threats of assault or destruction, to men and animals in his kingdom. It is his responsibility not only to provide for the security of his people but also assure safe living for the birds and beasts of the land [DN.III. 60f.; AN.I. 109 f.]. Considerations both social and religious called for such an attitude. It was the obligation of a righteous ruler which has been honored and upheld as an ideal for over two thousand years in the history of our land. Out of such a philosophy which had the premier sanction of the state was born a deep-seated love for the environment, not only to include the birds and the beasts but also to tend the vegetation and foster growth of trees and plants.

People had already learnt to derive aesthetic delight and spiritual solace from them. It was already present in the spirit of the religion and the first lessons in this wise were taught by the great stalwarts of the Sāsana like the Venerable Sāriputta and Mahā Kassapa. Their appraisal of the forest and all that is therein, including the birds and the beasts, must turn out to a recurrent theme on which our elders in the homes talk with fair frequency and therefore come to be well known to and appreciated by our younger generation. Let it ring through the ear of every good Buddhist as the Venerable Sāriputta sings of the richness of the forest in this manner. We even conceive the possibility of these words being set to music in a manner that would certainly be spiritually edifying. Dwell upon the depth of the idea contained in this utterance. A musically creative mind, enriched with a religious sanctity and sensitivity, could even create a whole symphony out

of it.

*Ramaṇīyāni araññāni yattha na ramati jano*  
*Vītarāgā ramissantī na te kāmagavesīno.* Thag. v. 992

Delightful are the forests, where no crowd [i.e. common worldlings]  
 Doth come to take its pleasure; there will they  
 Who are released from passions find their joy.  
 Not seekers they for sense - satiety.

Psalms of the Brethren v. 992

Here the Venerable Sāriputta keenly observes at the same time that the untutored and therefore *uncultured* worldlings are insensitive to these. The true Buddhist disciples are very much in this line of thinking for, like Thera Ekavihāriya, they know that the Lord himself led the way in this direction. Ekavihāriya Thera says:

*Handa eko gamissāmi araññaṃ buddhavaṇṇitaṃ.* Thag. v. 537

Let me alone to the forest resort, the place  
 Much praised by the Buddha.

Thera Mahā Kassapa finds the enchantment of the forest enhanced as the trumpeting of the wild elephants reverberates through the upland glades.

*Kuñjarābhirudā rammā te selā ramayanti maṃ* Thag. v. 1062

As the impact of Buddhism came to be felt more and more on the life of Emperor Asoka of India, we see him increasingly practice this love towards animals. Not only the provision of sanctuaries for animals but even a reduction in the slaughter of animals for the royal kitchen is witnessed. Almost on the day Asoka's missionaries arrived in Sri Lanka, the ruler of the land, Devanampiya

Tissa was out on the royal hunt. It was obviously an expression of a traditional elitist snobbery. It was undoubtedly much less prompted by the desire for venison. Note how perverse social values like these, both of the rulers and of the ruled, can send those around scaling up slippery walls, to result in disastrous falls to death and destruction.

But it did not take long in Sri Lanka for the turn of this tide. Rulers of the land began to show consideration even for the life of animals. Ban on the slaughter of animals came to be imposed from time to time. Kings of Sri Lanka like Amandagāmani, Silākāla, Aggabodhi IV and Mahinda III, following this tradition of just kingship, ordered from time to time that no animals should be slaughtered [*Māghātaṃ kārayi dīpe sabbesaṃ yeva pāṇīnam* . Mhv 41. v. 30], and set up veterinary hospitals for the treatment of sick animals. That even fishes, birds and beasts [*macchānaṃ migapakkhīnaṃ* Ibid. 48. v. 97] came under the loving care [*kattabbaṃ sabbaṃ ācari*. Ibid] of a king like Sena I is undoubtedly owing to the benevolent influence of Buddhism. Sanctuaries for animals, including 'safe pools' for fish in rivers and lakes became a common sight in the land. This is more to be viewed as a magnanimous change of heart and a desirable change in the value systems of the land. It seems to make much less sense to view this as a total imposition of vegetarianism or as leading, on the other hand, to malnutrition or economic disaster as some modernist fanciful writers suggest at times. We don't need to quote them here.

In fact, one of the kings is supposed to have popularized the eating of fruits as against the 'easy way' of meat eating and himself undertaken the growing of various types of fruit in the land. Obviously they knew what they were doing and had commendably long-range vision. They also seem to have held the view that it was too presumptuous to believe that man had exclusive rights over the land in which he lived to the exclusion of fauna and flora. On the other hand, they believed that the fauna and flora not only had a right of their own but also contributed in no small measure to the total harmonious growth of the land. This

ecological sensitivity and the respect man has for it, is the main stay which in the long run saves him from extinction in this very planet.

The protagonists of the idea of *biophilia hypothesis* whom we have already quoted above are laudably moving today in the same direction. But they cannot emphasize it any more than what their Sri Lankan predecessors have implicitly done more than a thousand years ago. The contemporary stress on this kind of thinking, namely that the desire for the survival of man must go closely hand in hand with an equal degree of respect for the survival and well-being of the animal world is boldly reflected in the writings of today's philosopher-thinkers like Peter Singer [Professor of Bio Ethics at Monash University, Australia.]. One must co-operatively read his **Animal Liberation** [1975, 1990] and his **Save the Animals** [co-authored with Barbara Dover and Ingrid Newkirk [1990,1991] to comprehend the total dimension of this line of thinking and meaningfully relate it to the Buddhist concept of love or universal loving kindness [Pali *mettā* and Skt. *maitrī*].

In a beautiful brief FOREWORD to the small book **Save the Animals** referred to above, Linda McCartney writes the following with a remarkably disarming candour.

` A long time ago we realized that anyone who cares about the Earth -- really cares -- must stop eating animals. The more we read about deforestation, water pollution, and topsoil erosion, the stronger that realization becomes. Of course, anyone who cares about *animals* must stop eating animals. Just the thought of what happens in a slaughter house is enough. We stopped eating meat the day we happened to look out of our window during Sunday lunch and saw our young lambs playing happily, as kittens do, in the fields. Eating bits of them suddenly made no sense. In fact, it was revolting. If you want to live a longer and healthier life, the conclusion is exactly the same, *naturally!*

This spirit of concern for the world we live in and the total content thereof,

both animate and inanimate, is reflected in many parts of the thinking world. Here is Frances Moore Lappe expressing a very candid opinion on this subject in her **Diet for a Small Planet** [Twentieth Anniversary Edition: November 1991 / Ballantine Books, New York].

“The change you and I witness in a lifetime now exceeds what in previous centuries transpired over many generations. And we who were born after World War II are the first to know that our choices count : They count on a global scale. They matter in evolutionary time. In our species' fantastic rush toward "modernization" we obliterate millions of other species, transfigure the earth's surface, and create climate-changing disruption of the upper atmosphere, all powerfully altering the path of evolution.

More personally, I feel the quickening of time in realizing that what was heresy, what was "fringe," when I wrote **Diet for a Small Planet** just twenty years ago is now common knowledge.

Then, the notion that human beings could do well without meat was heretical. Today, the medical establishment acknowledges the numerous benefits of eating low on the food chain.

Then, anyone who questioned the American diet's reliance on beef -- since cattle are the most wasteful converters of grain to meat -- was perceived as challenging the American way of life (especially , when that someone came from Fort Worth, Texas -- "Cowtown, USA"). Today, the expanding herds of cattle world-wide are not only recognized as poor plant-to-meat converters but are documented contributors to global climate change. They're responsible for releasing enormous quantities of methane into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming.

Then, anyone who questioned industrial agriculture -- fossil fuel and chemically dependent -- was seen as naive " back to the lander." To challenge industrial agriculture was to question efficiency itself and to wish us

all back into the fields at hard labor. Today, the National Academy of Sciences acknowledges the threat of agricultural chemicals and even the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that the small family farm is at least as efficient as the superfarms undermining America's rural communities. ' [Ibid. p. xv f.]

Having put forward what might be termed a Buddhist point of view with regard to love and care of nature and environment, it is well worth illustrating this in actual operation in Buddhist life. It is best we begin with the Buddha himself. A beautiful story in the Buddhist books [DA.II. p.675] describes the Buddha's going to the region of Kunala Lake on holiday with a large number of monks who are said to have been afflicted with anxiety and consequent stress. The very idea of the Buddha's decision to take these monks to the lake district to relieve them of their boredom is fascinating and illuminating. On arrival there, he started the season as it were by inviting the monks to inquire from him about the names of the diverse species of fish in that lake which they could not identify. They did as requested and the Buddha was able to help them with the identification of the various species of fish that attracted their attention.

The intimacy with which he had known his environment and his absorbing interest in them is revealed as the text further says that his knowledge of the environment extended beyond the fish in the lake to the trees on the mountain slopes, and to the birds and beasts [*Na kevalañ ca macchānaṃ yeva. Tasmim̐ vanasaṅḍe rukkhānaṃ pi pabbatapāde dipada-catuppada-sakunānaṃ pi nāmāni pucchāpetvā kathesi.* loc. cit.]. On inquiry, he was able to help his companions with the identification of each one of them. This diversion and diversification of interest in and into areas which are inoffensive to monastic aspirations and are non-corrosive, seems an ingenious exercise in psychotherapy, even in the more complex and sophisticated society of today.

This rapport which one is capable of developing with the environment, including everything both animate and inanimate, through the teachings of

Buddhism, concerns itself not only with the pleasant and the beautiful, but also with what is even regarded as fierce, weird and grotesque. To the spiritually oriented and those who are mature on the Buddhist path, these discriminating differences of ugly and beautiful, pleasant and fierce are both relative and arbitrary reckonings which are by no means insurmountable through the cultivation of a new outlook. Thus it becomes an attainable reality that man shall not be in conflict, and hence be hostile to man or to the environment. Once this idea of functional integration of man and nature is properly grasped, it would not be possible for man to lay his hands on nature in a way that would damage or destroy it. The outcome of this philosophy is eloquently and authentically manifest in the Japanese arts of flower arrangement [*Ike bana*] and landscape gardening. And it is admitted and they make no secret of it that they owe these to Buddhist inspiration which they inherited nearly fifteen centuries ago.

If one carefully scans the ecstasies of the early disciples of the Buddha, expressed in works like the Theragāthā, one discovers the sources which inspired this austerity in artistic appreciation, and this love of the weird and the grotesque. It is the goal of a man seeking peace and tranquility, of development within and without, to be harmoniously blended with nature. Adequate proof of it may be given from the very words of Buddha's own disciples. Animals that are stigmatized as a threat to man or are believed to stand in his way, when viewed from this magnanimous angle are seen to be never so hostile. Far from it, they can be integrated into a harmonious community, adequately respecting both their right to be in it and the valuable part they can play towards its uplift. It may be a Nirvana-oriented disciple we see when we meet Thera Tālapuṭa, who can with honesty and sincerity say the following.

There in the jungle ringing with the cries  
 Of peacock and of heron wilt thou dwell  
 By panthers and by tigers owned as chief.  
 And for the body cast off care;

Miss not thine hour, thine aim! Ps.B. v. 1113.  
Or hear in the words of Kassapa the Great a similar ring.

Those upland glades delightful to the soul,  
Where the Kareri spreads its wildering wreaths,  
Where sound the trumpet-calls of elephants;  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights. Ibid. v. 1062

The charms of lakes and mountains were well known and wisely appreciated by the poet-disciples of the Buddhist community, inheriting this legacy as it were, from the Master himself to whose love of nature we have already referred. Hear same elder Kassapa, waxing eloquent on them:

Those rocky heights with hue of dark blue clouds,  
Where lies embosomed many a shining tarn  
Of crystal-clear, cool waters, and whose slopes  
The 'herds of Indra' cover and bedeck:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.  
Like serried battlements of blue-black cloud  
Like pinnacle on stately castle built  
Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk:  
Those are the braes wherin my soul delights.  
Fair uplands rain-refreshed, and resonant  
With crested creatures' cries antiphonal,  
Lone heights where silent Rishis oft resort:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights. Ibid. vv. 1063-65

Yet another finds joyous company with birds and beasts.

O (thou wilt love the life), be 't on the crest  
Of caverned cliffs, where herd boar and gazelle,  
Or in fair open glade, or in the depths



Of forest freshened by new rain - 'tis there  
 Lies joy for thee to cavern-cottage gone.  
 Fair-plumed, fair-crested passengers of air  
 With deep blue throats and many-hued of wing,  
 Give greeting to the muttering thundercloud  
 With cries melodious, manifold; 'tis they  
 Will give thee joy whilst thou art musing there. Ibid. vv. 1135-36

Through this philosophy is achieved a transcendence, a release from the rigidity of the workaday life:

And when the god rains on the four-inch grass,  
 And on the cloud-like crests of budding woods,  
 Within the mountain's heart I'll seated be  
 Immobile as a lopped off bough, and soft  
 As cotton down my rocky couch shall seem. Ibid. v. 1137

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## (4) Happy Wayfarer

The word wayfarer or *maggānuga* is used in Buddhist texts to denote the disciple who is intent on treading the path to release from suffering as announced and indicated by the Master. As the venerable Ānanda puts it to the Brahmin Gopaka-Moggallāna, in reply to a question about the relationship between the Master and his disciples, the Buddha is the one who propounds the hitherto unknown way [*anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā*], the knower of the way [*maggaññū maggavidū*] and the one who is skilled in the way [*maggakovido*]. The disciples thereafter [*pacchā-samannāgatā*] tread the way [*maggānugā ca pana etarahi sāvakā viharanti pacchā samannāgatā ' ti*. MN.III. 8].

Let us now talk about the life of the true Buddhist disciple who with a deep conviction accepts the teaching of the Buddha as the only way to release from *dukkha* or the sufferings of life. We are thus immediately brought face to face with the two concepts of *dukkha* and *nirodha* in Buddhism, *nirodha* being the total cessation or the ceasing to be of the unsatisfactory continuation of the process of living which is called *samsāra* with its generative power of *bhava* behind it. It is the cessation of this process or the total evaporation of this power [and none other] that we refer to as *nibbāna* [*bhava-nirodho nibbānaṃ*. SN. II. 117]. By whatever other name one calls it, the net result in *nibbāna* is this, that the wheel of life shall roll on no more [*yattha vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati* SN. ??] and no other. This is also the final goal of our religious striving, our endeavor to achieve concentration of mind [*samādhī*] and beyond it perfect development of wisdom [*paññā = ñāṇaṃ*]. The net result of this is the attainment of arahant hood.

The message of Buddhism primarily focuses attention on this predicament [or the unpleasant situation] in which man finds himself. At this stage, it is good for us to be immediately reminded of the vocabulary which the Bodhisattva himself uses as he reflects on this problem : *Kicchaṃ vatā 'yam loko āpanno jāyati ca jīyati ca mīyati ca cavati ca uppajjati ca*. [SN.II. 104]. His observation is that 'the world indeed is plunged in a very distressing situation.' It is distressing because of the concomitants of life such as the painful changes in the process of growth and maturity called *jarā* which also brings in its wake *vyādhi* or disease, terminating in death or *maraṇa*.

It is the reality of these which invariably led many among the mortals to speculate on the absence of these failings like decay, disease and death, in their unpleasantly manifest gross form, in the life in the heavenly worlds.[In the heavenly worlds known to the Buddhists, none of those failings of decay, disease and death are said to be not grossly manifest.] It is for this same reason that in more recent times, well-motivated men were driven to look for their solution in such remedial measures like organ-transplant. It is an adventure as thoroughly

visualized as the plan to grow vegetables on the moon to meet speculated world shortages on this planet. This, we know, was announced in the western world, in a credibly serious mood, in the sixties and seventies of this century. But this is not to see the problem in its totality.

In the Buddhist texts we are reliably informed that this plight of man stretches infinitely through time and space. But we note with regret the hyper-intellectual slant today to view the human problem as presented in Buddhism to be a matter of one life time, contained within a single frame between birth and death. It is here that our *saddhā* or reliance [or trusting in, of course, in the Buddha and his teaching] comes in, for without it we would reject both concepts of *dukkha* and *nirodha* which are the basics [numbers one and three] of the four noble truths [i.e. *cattāri ariya-saccāni*] which deliver to the world the message of Buddhism. [See Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta at SN.V. 421 f. and Vin. I.10]. It is this third dimension of life, namely the *saṃsāric* one, which we have to seriously bear in mind. While Buddhist texts repeatedly speak of it as '*anamataggā 'yaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubbā koṭi na paññāyati*' [at SN. II. 178 and SN.V. 226] which means 'Infinite is this life process of man and its first beginning is not discernible', yet there are people even within the Buddhist fold who would have us believe that both the problem of man and its solution are matters only of one life time.

This life process of man which we come to take note of from his present conceivable existence, it must be remembered, descends into our midst from the past and stretches across into the incalculable future, again beyond our ken. If this were not true, the Bodhisattva during his observations quoted above [SN. II.104], would not go on to continue his remarks as *mīyati ca cavati ca uppajjati ca* : dies, passes away from one existence to another, and is born [again]. And also talking of final release, the Buddha speaks of it as the absence of a regeneration of all this in a new life beyond the present. This result is equated to the absence of all that which were described as the ills of life [*Yattha natthi*

*āyatim punabbhavābhinibbatti tattha natthi āyatim jāti-jarā-maraṇaṃ*. SN.II. 65 f. & 103 f.]. It is the totality of this process, found to be here as well as hereafter [*idha loke patiṭṭhitaṃ paraloke patiṭṭhitaṃ*] which is referred to in Buddhism as *saṃsāra*.

As we give further thought to what has been discussed so far and consider from the Buddhist angle the contributory factors which sustain this *saṃsāric* process, we discover ignorance or *avijjā* and craving or *taṇhā* as what underlie this [*avijjā-nīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsaṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsarataṃ*. op. cit.178]. On further investigation we discover that *saṃsāra* also implies existence both in the human plane and in several others above and below it. This is what we discover as we proceed from the known and the seen, i.e. life here and now, in the direction of the unknown and the unseen, through time and space, i.e. of what is beyond this life, beyond death. This journeying into a life beyond or *gati* is said to be fivefold : *Pañca kho imā Sāriputta gatayo. Katamā pañca. Nirayo tiracchāna-yoni pitti-visayo manussā devā*. [MN.I. 73]. In a superior state above man stands *deva*, and immediately below *devas* is the human. There are three inferior states below the human, viz. hells of torture [*niraya*], animal world [*tiracchāna-yoni*] and the realm of famishing ghosts [*preta* = *pitti-visaya*].

Here it is well to remember that true humility with regard to limitations of our knowledge and our ability to know can be extremely rewarding. Let us profit by knowing that there are limits to our cocksureness even in this space age of high-class scientific achievement and that failures are possible even with the surest of calculations. This did happen even with very sophisticated space-ships [fired through the NASA] like the Mars Observer [unmanned] which ended up in disaster after eleven months of very successful travel in outer space, and the German sponsored research-shuttle Discovery [with a team of scientists within] which generated repeated engine trouble before its final take-off.

Now bring to mind what you know or have heard before about *sugati* and

*duggatī*, i.e. better or worse states of existence over to which we go after death, in terms of our moral and immoral conduct or *sucarita* and *duccarita* [...*kāyena...vācāya...manasā sucaritaṃ caritvā kāyassa bhedaṃ parammaraṇā sugatiṃ saggam lokam upapajjati* and ...*duccaritaṃ caritvā apāyaṃ duggatim vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ upapajjati*. AN.III. 385]. This self-operative law of moral equity is also referred to in Buddhist texts as 'journeying from light to darkness and darkness to light' and vice versa, thus indicating four clear types: 1. *tamo tamaparāyano*, 2. *tamo jotiparāyano*, 3. *joti tamaparāyano*, 4. *joti jotiparāyano*. [AN.II. 85 f.]. This is essentially part of Buddhist belief and all our ethics and patterns of good religious living are tied up with this.

The more spiritually developed disciples recount with convincing vividness their sojourning in *saṃsāra*. You and I both must meet these disciples, for they alone can deepen our convictions and give us greater stability in our path of spiritual progress [not by cutting and filing and putting in the fire the words of the Buddha]. In our opinion, it is more than a stupid venture either to ask for or attempt to provide laboratory proof for these elements in religion.

Let me also now tell you that you cannot be a reasonably good Buddhist, worthy of your brand name in the market, without knowing enough of Buddhist thought and enough of the story of Buddhism. I shall now open out for you the Thera- and Theri- gāthā and present to you Thera Gotama [Thag. vv. 258-260] from among the Theras and Theri Sisūpacālā [Thig. vv. 196-203] and Theri Sumedhā [Thig. vv. 448-522] from the Theris for real serious study. If these names do not mean much to you as you hear them, I presume you know more about the dramatic miracles of Thera Moggallāna and the harrowing versions of the Paṭācārā story [which in truth is the story of Kisāgotami. See Therīgāthā vv. 213-223]

Thera Gotama whom we referred to above, impresses on us the reality of *saṃsāra*, i.e. the wide range of existence or *gati* which is painful and perilous and subject to laws of change in which we are liable to find ourselves. He also knows

of the heavenly worlds and the *rūpa* and *arūpa bhavas* , some of these existences being of reduced corporeality and limited psychic activity. Sooner or later, one has to acquire the necessary sense and sanity to reject them all outright, even though at times these apparently higher planes are made to look attractive and consequently turn out to be misleading. This sense of good judgement in rejecting the apparitional enchantment of the heavenly worlds is clearly evident in a cryptic verse in the Samyutta Nikaya [SN.I. 33] which runs as follows.

That forest resounding with  
 The voices of the celestial nymphs  
 Is to me verily a haunt of goblins.  
 It drives anyone crazy.  
 How does one find one's way out of it?  
*Accharā-gaṇa-saṃghuṭṭhaṃ pisāca-gaṇa-sevitaṃ*  
*Vanaṃ taṃ mohanaṃ nāma kathaṃ yātrā bhavissati.*

The commentator identifies this as an allusion to Sakka's pleasure park named Nandana and places these remarks in the mouth of an *ariyan* disciple who is disgusted on discovering that he is accidentally born in the midst of celestial nymphs as a reward for his spiritual endeavors.

Thus it becomes clear why Buddhist biographies must be meaningfully utilized to stimulate followers to make a genuine attempt to accord with the Buddhist way of thinking. Let us now meet Theri Sisūpacālā who, vividly recollecting her life in the planes of heavenly existence sees it opportune now, through her own honest personal experience, to reject any desire for them. Devas in all planes of existence such as Tāvātimsa, Yāma, Tusita, Nimmānarati and Vasavatti, she argues, are preoccupied with a notion of selfhood [*sakkāyasmim purakkhatā*] and are therefore subject to the ills of birth and death [*jātimaraṇa-sārino*]. The only way to happiness and freedom from stress and

strain is through the transcendence of this known world of existence or *bhava*, in the attainment of *nibbāna*. Anything short of it is fraught with danger. The most convincing exposition on this subject is by Theri Sumedhā [Thig. vv. 453-457]. No Buddhist can afford to be ignorant of these if he is to imbibe true Buddhist values for the salvation of his own self.

Faced with the crisis situation in life of having to opt between two things of extremely divergent attraction she makes a choice with remarkable ease, backed by the depth of a conviction and the firmness of belief in her own value system. Few are seen to be capable of such action but it should be the endeavor of every one to acquire such stature. A royal princess, she rejects her parents' proposal to marry her to a reigning monarch, and makes this incisive remark that it is the ignorance of the truths as taught by the Buddha which make people choose or opt for birth in the heavenly worlds. For the heavenly worlds are still part of the *samsāric* tangle [*bhavagataṃ*].

*Bālā te duppaññā acetanā*  
*Dukkha-samudayoruddhā*  
*Desente ajānantā*  
*Na bujjhare ariyasaccāni*  
*Saccāni amma buddhavara-desitāni*  
*Te bahutarā ajānantā*  
*Ye abhinandanti bhavagataṃ*  
*Pihenti devesu upapattiṃ.* Thig. vv. 453-4

She further clarifies her own position with these remarks. Note how remarkably resonant they are with the injunctions of the Dhammapada verse no. 290 which emphasizes the need in the life of a man to make choices and decisions with courage and wisdom in order to acquire maximum happiness in the process of living. The rejection of what is trifling for the sake of what is great and noble is a sacrifice which every right thinking man has to do for the

enhancement of his happiness. In the Pali, it strikes us as a delightfully candid cameo. Here it is.

*Mattā sukhapariccāgā passe ce vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.*

*Caje mattāsukhaṃ dhīro saṃpassaṃ vipulaṃ sukhaṃ.* Dh. v. 290

If in the rejection of minor sources of happiness,  
One does behold happiness much more intense.  
The wise do reject the minor, on seeing  
Happiness which is immensely great.

In the case of Theri Sumedhā, we find here an illustrious example of how a general instruction of the dhamma comes to be specifically applied in the life of a person. Thus she remarks.

*Mā appakassa hetu kāmasukhassa vipulaṃ jahi sukhaṃ*

*Mā puthulomo ' va balisaṃ gilivā pacchā vihaññasi.* Thig. v. 508

For the sake of the joys of trivial sensualities  
Reject not happiness which exceeds them by far.  
Like a fish that has swallowed a baited hook  
Let no man provide an occasion for torments afterwards.

With a vastness of vision acquired, she makes these enlightening observations, scoffing even at the pleasures of the so-called *sugati* states of *deva* and *manussa*.

Both in the pleasurable worlds of gods and men,  
And in the realms of animals and the Titans [*asura*],  
Among the hungry ghosts [*petā*] and the burning hells,  
Afflictions are seen to exist in countless number. Thig. v. 475



What we said so far makes it clear that a true wayfarer in Buddhism is one who accepts the unsatisfactoriness of life in *saṃsāra*, i.e. the Buddhist exposition of the truth of *dukkha* and resolves to bring about a cessation of the life process in *saṃsāra* in which, well and truly, lies the genesis of *dukkha*. This amounts to the truth of *nirodha*. These and these alone which every Buddhist must know form the subject of the Buddha's teaching. While on this subject, let me refer you to something I had written as far back as 1964.

Thus it is clear that the fact of *dukkha* was the starting point of the Buddha's journey of discovery of the causative links. As Buddha, he makes this point crystal clear in more than one place. Thus he tells the Venerable Anurādhā. 'One thing do I teach - suffering and the deliverance from suffering' [*Sādhū sādhū Anurādhā. Pubbe cā 'haṃ Anurādhā etarahi ca dukkhañ c'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhan 'ti.* SN.IV. 284. See also MN.I.140]. Nothing could have been a more realistic approach to *mokṣa* or deliverance than an awareness of the presence of suffering and a desire to terminate it. Even in his first sermon to the Pancavaggiya monks [Vin.I.10], the Buddha discourses on *dukkha* and the escape therefrom. This is so fundamentally the dominant theme of Buddhism that even the philosophical expositions of *nibbāna* savour of this. They describe *nibbāna* as being the termination of *dukkha*: *es ' ev ' anto dukkhassa* [*Atthi bhikkhave tadāyatanaṃ yattha n'eva paṭhavī na āpo....es' ev ' anto dukkhassā "ti.* Ud. 80 f.].

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Such a one who has this knowledge and this conviction is swimming against the current of *saṃsāra* or is *paṭisotagāmī* and is not carried down stream by the current as it chooses. He is just not flotsam and jetsam in the ocean of *saṃsāra*. He is a pilot with the vision and vigour to guide his vessel to safety. Being educated as a Buddhist, i.e possessing *sammā diṭṭhi* and being aware of the

significance of *tilakkhaṇa* : *anicca dukkha anatta*, he knows that in piloting his way to *nibbāna*, he should avoid the danger zones, not run into storms, nor run aground. This adequate schooling in the art of navigation, of being able to ferry oneself out of *saṃsāra* as is implied in the question ' How does one cross over this vast flood ?' [*kathaṃ su tarati oghaṃ* at Sn.I. 214], every Buddhist must acquire by himself.

It should be clear by now to both you and me why it is said that Buddhism is a religion for the wise [... *paññavato ayaṃ dhammo nāyaṃ dhammo duppaññassā ' ti*. AN. IV. 229]. It is for those who are willing to acquire the necessary wisdom to transcend all that is painful and mundane [... *paññāya c ' assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*. MN.I.160]. It is the diligent entry into the religion which paves the way for this wisdom. When we say diligent entry into religion what we mean is that there must be a practical measure of *sammā diṭṭhi* or correct [or corrected] vision, i.e. in other words **a basis for choosing to live as a Buddhist**. There must be **a revision or reconstitution of one's outlook on life**. Till one is aware of this and has come to terms with it, there would be no real grounding in *sīla*. No need would be felt for the basic establishment in moral rectitude which is an invariable pre-requisite of Buddhist religious life. Correct vision or *sammā diṭṭhi* of the Buddhist is the conformity in one's belief to the teaching of the four Noble Truths or *saccānulomikatā ñāṇa*. This is what makes the vision specifically Buddhist. Besides this there would also be the belief in the efficacy of *karma* [*kammasakatā ñāṇa*] which is conceded in the Buddhist texts even to those outside the pale of Buddhism [See the relevant portion of the Commentary to the Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta at MA. I. 177].

This awareness gives life a new sense of direction, a new ease and comfort. The danger of life in *saṃsāra* has to be felt to a greater or lesser degree. In Buddhism, it is this which draws one nearer to religiousness. Theri Sumedhā whom we have already quoted above says very emphatically that the absence of this fear turns men into fools: *Na ca santasanti bālā punappunaṃ jāyitabbassa =*

Fools dread not the fact of being born again and again. [Thig. v. 455]. It is at this stage that analytical wisdom begins to grow in the Buddhist. He begins to realize that all activity prompted by greed, hatred and delusion [*lobha dosa moha*], spiralling out of the basic error of selfhood or egoism contributes to the building up of *saṃsāra*. Consequently, it must dawn on him that a basic Buddhist need is a gradual but definite and determined withdrawal from *ahaṃkāra* and *mamiṅkāra* or notions of I and mine. That process of individuation leading to differentiation as I and the other and the consequent attraction to and repulsion from persons and things in one's day to day life, not only makes life painful but also makes the life process painfully longer. One has to acquire the skill to detect these two vicious tendencies of greed and hostility at work in life. Religious culture, the Buddha tells his own son Rāhula in the Mahārāhulovāda Sutta [MN.I. 420-426], means the effort to reduce and eliminate these. The word used by the Buddha for this process of culture is *bhāvanā*. It is a process of culture or induced growth to free the mind of man from such evil traits like malevolence or *vyāpāda*, or harming will or *vihesā*. Here it is the cultivation of *mettā* and *karuṇā* followed by the ther *brahmavihāra*, namely *muditā* or appreciative joy and *upekkhā* or equanimity. *Mettā* is friendliness between and among persons. It is the attitude of being a friend of every other person, or the state of being free of a feeling of hostility. Its basic assumption is the absence of a state of enmity. Its injunction is 'love every one as you love yourself.' Most people apparently do not know what they should really be doing when they assume they are developing *mettā*. It cannot stop at being a mere wish or prayer on behalf of another. It is the correction and culturing of one's own attitude towards the rest of the world. This idea is richly expressed in a four-line verse in the Suttanipāta.

Mettañ ca sabba-lokasmim mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ  
Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañ ca asaṃbādhaṃ averaṃ asapattam .

Sn. v.150

You would more readily pick it up if you were told that it occurs in the Metta

Sutta of the *Paritta* collection. From wherever it be, if you know it at all, its message should run as follows.

‘ One should develop and nurture [the verb used here is *bhāvaye* = one should develop or nurture, this being the basic idea of any form of *bhāvanā* in Buddhism] towards the entire world a mind full of love and friendliness which is infinite and unhindered as well as untainted by feelings of enmity, stretching in every direction, above, below and across.’ Note also the following statements from Buddhist texts and attempt to understand the true Buddhist concept of *mettā*.

Since you love yourself, hurt not another.

*Tasmā na hiṃse paraṃ attakāmo.* SN. I. 75

If you put yourself in the position of the other, then you could cause no danger to life or limb of another.

*Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye.* Dh. v. 129

As you develop *mettā* or friendliness, hostility ceases.

*Mettaṃ hi te Rāhula bhāvayato yo vyāpādo so pahīyati.* MN. I. 424

*Karuṇā* which is next in the list of *Brahmavihāra* is compassion or the desire to reduce and eliminate the pain of another, its injunction being ‘ you shall not delight in the pain of another or remain unmoved.’ The Pali Commentators offer two beautiful definitions to this term.

1. *Aho vata imamahā dukkhā vimucceyan ’ ti ādinā nayena ahita-dukkhāpanayana-kāmatā karuṇā* [SnA. I. 128 on Sn. v. 73]. *Karuṇā* is the desire to eliminate pain and sorrow of others saying ‘ May they be released from this misery.’

2. *Para-dukkhe sati sādhuṇaṃ hadaya-kampanaṃ karotī ti karuṇā.* [Vism. 318]. *Karuṇā* causes the heart of good people to tremble on seeing the suffering of others. *Muditā* is the rejoicing in the happiness and success of another. It

should certainly be translated as 'appreciative joy.' We regret it being translated as 'sympathetic joy'. Its injunction is 'Be not envious or jealous.' The commentator amplifies this concept by adding that *muditā* also implies the wish that people be not torn off their happiness and comfort [... *hita-sukhāvippayoga-kāmatā muditā*. SnA. I.128]. Cultivation of *muditā* would thus be remedial in effect in that it would necessarily displace envy and jealousy [*issā* and *macchariya*] as viciously active and anti-social evil states of mind. The commentary explains *issā* as the intolerance of the success and prosperity of others [*paesaṃ sakkārādīni khīyamānā*] and *macchariya* as the unwillingness to see others prosper as much as one does [*attano sampattiyā parehi sādharmaṇabhāvam asahamānaṃ macchariyaṃ*. Both at MA. I.168].

*Muditā* also appears to have another therapeutic value in removing apathy or psychopathic disinterestedness referred to in Pali as *arati* [commented on as *pantasenāsanesu c'eva adhikusalesu dhammesu ukkhaṇṭhitatā*. MA. III. 96]. In its place is substituted a spirit of constructive or creative dynamism, referred to in Buddhist texts as *ārabha-dhātu* or initiative [AN. III. 338]. *Upekkhā* which is the last item in the list of *Brahmavihāra* connotes a very significant stage in the process of mind culture in Buddhism, both in the *jhānas* and elsewhere. *Upekkhā* means the avoidance of emotional imbalances, of neither being elated nor depressed by way of reaction. It is the ability to look at pleasure and pain, happiness and unhappiness with perfect equipoise. Therefore it is not surprising that both in the *jhānas* and in the *Brahmavihāras*, *upekkhā* occupies almost the highest position as a state of mental development. [*Upekkhā* in its perfect form is associated in the fourth *jhāna*. See DN.I. 75].

Thus we see the ordinary worldling moving from the world of mundane existence into a new arena, to a world of modified thinking. Mark these words 'new world of modified thinking' where, while the physical world stands exactly as it did before, the Buddhist wayfarer finds greater comfort and greater ease of movement on account of his own self adjustment. To the ordinary layman, the

degree of renunciation implied here might be bewildering. But to the wayfarer, it is only a higher plane of true happiness.

One of the finest examples of such a wayfarer, reflecting new dimensions in thinking which are truly Buddhist, is Thera Tālapuṭa of the Theragāthā [Thag. v.1091-1145]. No matter what the commentarial tradition says of him, he is seen visibly moving towards the goal of Nibbāna. Here are a few examples of his new attitudes and new aspirations. In the ultimate philosophical sense which is Buddhistic, he does not want to see a difference between himself and the world around him. He is adequately apprehensive of the notion of conceit that would ensue. So he says:

Whether they be grass and sticks in the world outside,  
Or be the aggregates that constitute my being,  
When will I be able to see them as yet, not being  
Different, one from the other ?

*Kadā nu kaṭṭhe ca tiṇe latā ca khandhe ime 'ham amite ca dhamme  
Ajjhattikān' eva ca bāhirāni samaṃ tuleyyaṃ tadidaṃ kadā me.*

Thag. v.1101

Thus a true Buddhist disciple is in no way in conflict with the world around him, whether it be inclement weather or the fury of the beasts of the wild. Our Thera Tālapuṭa, treading his sylvan path on which his sage predecessors have gone before him, would love to be drenched in a rain storm [Thag. v. 1102]. He further says:

Dwelling in the forest which is resounding  
With the cries of the peacock and the pond heron,  
And watched closely by the tigers and the leopards,  
Give up thy attachment to the physical self.  
Fail not in thy mission.

*Mayūra-koñcābhirudamhi kāṇane dīpīhi byaggehi purakkhato vasaṃ*

*Kāye apekkhaṃ jaha mā virādhaye iti ssu maṃ citta pure niyuñjasi.*

Thag. v.1113

It is heartening and reassuring to find many other monks in the Theragāthā express similar sentiments. Listen to what Thera Bhūta has to say.

When at midnight in the lonely forest  
Rain patters and wild beasts roar,  
The monk meditates deep in the rocky glen.  
No greater joy he gains than that.

*Y adā nisīthe rahitamhi kānane deve galantamhi nadanti dāṭhino*  
*Bhikku ca pabbhāra-gato 'va jhāyati tato ratim paramataram na vindati.*

Thag. v. 524

Being a true wayfarer, this is the same goal our Thera Tālapuṭa wants to reach soon. Elsewhere he says:

As I recline in the mountain cave  
Like a tree which is fallen down, the comfort of my stony-bed  
Is not different from that of soft cotton.

*Nagantare viṭapi-samo sayissaṃ*  
*Taṃ me mudu hohiti tūla-sannibhaṃ.* Thag. v. 1137

In a similar vein do speak other true wayfarers as well. There is a resonance in their voice. Meet Theras Vakkali [Thag. vv. 350-354], Nhātakamuni [Thag. vv.435-440] who are forest-dwellers. They are both afflicted with gout or *vāta-roga* and it is normally believed that austere living in the wet and damp forest could hardly be comfortable. But they both claim that being geared to a goal, they have endless joy in their hearts and by charging their bodies with it, they can overcome all pain. Austerity then means nothing to them. This is how they both put it in their utterances.

Pītisukhena vipulena pharamāno samussayaṃ  
Lūkaṃ ' pi abhisambhonto viharissāmi kāṇane.

Thag. vv. 351 & 436

These experiences of those who have gone before us on this path, all subscribe to the view of `a new vision, a new aspiration and a new strength for the pursuit of the chosen goal '.

Furthermore, in the new world of theirs, the Buddhist wayfarers discover a new richness which the clay-footed worldlings could hardly sense. The Theragāthā has an axiomatic utterance on it which no true Buddhist with any Buddhist values in him could afford not to know or to miss.

*Ramanīyāni araññāni yattha na ramati jano*

*Vīta-rāgā ramissantī na te kāma-gavesino.* Thag. v. 992

Delightful are those forest groves  
Wherein common folk never delight.  
Those gone beyond their lustful needs,  
They indeed do rejoice there.  
For they seek not after sensual pleasures.

Fauna and flora have a new meaning to them, not only in their outward form and appearance but also in their moods and temperament. A flock of white cranes flying away in fear of an oncoming rain storm [Thag. vv. 307-8], an array of *Jambu* trees laden with fruit along a river-bank [Thag. v. 309] or a pool-full of frogs singing in glee as they are freed from menacing water-snakes who are carried away down stream by a raging flood [Thag. v. 310], they all have their specific moods. Our wayfarers [my Thera Sappaka and many others] pick them up correctly and use them to propel themselves to greater heights.



*Yadā balākā sucipaṇḍaracchadā kālassa meghassa bhayena tajjitā  
palehiti ālayaṃ ālayesinī tadā nadī ajakaraṇī rameti maṃ.*

Thag. v. 307

*Kan nu tattha na ramenti jambuyo ubhato tahiṃ  
Sobhenti āpagā-kūlam mama lenassa pacchato.*

Ibid. v. 309

*Tāmatamadasaṅgasuppahīnā bhekā mandavatī panādayanti  
Nājja girinadīhi vipavāsa-samayo. Khemā Ajakaraṇī sivā surammā.*

Ibid. v. 310

What is very characteristic about the Buddhist wayfarer is his total awareness of the goal he has opted and of the need to follow a specific path for its attainment. As we have already indicated, not only the *theras* but also the *theris* feature prominently as successful wayfarers. Younger ones in particular, like Rohinī [Thig. vv. 271-290], Puṇṇikā [Thig. vv. 236-251] and Subhā of Jivaka's Mango Grove [Thig. vv. 366-398] show remarkable depth of conviction and sincerity of purpose. They resist temptations with fortitude and stand up to challenges with wisdom as Subhā and Somā did [Thig. vv. 60-62], dwarfing as it were the stature of *theras* and *theris* much older in years. We shall meet them elsewhere.

Thus our Buddhist wayfarers are the true *srāvaka-saṅgha* or community of disciples of the Buddha and it is in recognition of what they have been in the history of the *Sāsana* that they are constantly adored by us with the words *supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-saṅgho*, as we pay our homage to them. They are on the correct track as they have proved from their own lives. We see them all unmistakably reach their goal. They are exemplary in character and are a worthy group to be in our midst, even in our memory. We are hopeful that we would benefit from their presence. Hence we finally say of them, of those who

have gone ahead of us on the path, *anuttaram puññakkhettaṃ lokassā 'ti*. They are an unexcelled field of merit for the world.

Theirs is undeniably a correct vision and a life sublime.

## (5) To be Good is to be Great

### - A Religio-Social Analysis

The concept of goodness in Buddhism has both an individual and social dimension. It can also be viewed as being related to two different planes, the mundane and the transcendental. This dichotomy or duality does not imply sharply divided categories, standing strictly apart all the time. To grasp this position thoroughly one has to comprehend some of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism even at a basic level. The first of these, we would almost say, is the rejection of an all pervading other-power besides man himself, who provides succour to him materially and spiritually and presides over his destinies [*attāno loko anabhissaro*]. This position is very clearly indicated in the Raṭṭhapāla Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.II.54-74]. It is one of four *dhammuddesā* or basic doctrinal positions, the awareness and understanding of which gives every Buddhist his distinct poise and dignity in life. Without a serious grasp and acceptance these specific doctrines, one could hardly claim to be a Buddhist, and much less claim to lead a Buddhist life.

Erring disciples like Ariṭṭha and Sāti in early Buddhist history have been severely chastised by the Buddha for such lapses. They have been told that they have not had even a warming up in the religious life of Buddhism : *na usmīkato ' pi imasmiṃ dhammavinaye*. They turn out to be substandard rejects [MN.I. 132 and 258]. The basic value of this doctrine of not accepting an all-pervading other power as one's guide is to be thoroughly understood. It gives a distinct character

to the whole way of Buddhist living. Self-reliance [without kneeling down before a wide variety of divinities and praying for an equally wide and wild variety of gifts and favors] and a total grasp of the Buddhist teachings therefore turn out to be the basic ingredients of Buddhist life.

This is the total implication of the relentless position taken in the Buddhist texts that this teaching is for the wise and not for the unwise: *paññavat ' āyaṃ dhammo nāyaṃ dhammo duppaññassa*. [AN.IV.229]. Buddhism wishes us to realize the basic position that all sense stimuli of the world make man move all the time in either of two primary directions of attraction and repulsion. Herein an attainable position of neutrality, attainable through a self-acquired culture of being neither attracted nor repelled is contemplated. Both these processes of mental stirring up or agitation [See *anurodha* and *virodha* at MN.I. 266] underlie the genesis of the life process which is referred to as *bhava*. In the absence of such activity of the mind [*anurodha* + *virodha* + *vippahīno* MN. I. 270] man acquires no momentum for the regeneration, from one life span to yet another, of our life process [MN.I. 65 & 109]. All religio-spiritual endeavors are undertaken to bring about this position of neutrality, of reacting without being attracted to or repelled by the sensory stimuli of the world. This is the one and only basis of release in Buddhism [*anupādā parinibbāna* - MN.I.148 ; II. 265]. This ceaseless process of dual agitation to surrender and to succumb [*anunaya*] on the one hand, and to resist and assail [*paṭigha*] on the other is a subject of recurrent admonition.

1. *Yo imesu pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu chando ālayo anunayo ajjhosānaṃ so dukkha-samudayo*. [MN.I 191].

2. *Yato-nidānaṃ bhikkhu purisaṃ papañca-saññā- saṅkhā samudācaranti ettha ce natthi abhinanditabbaṃ abhivaditabbaṃ ajjhositabbaṃ es' evanto rāgānusayānaṃ es ' evanto paṭighānusayānaṃ es ' evanto diṭṭhānusayānaṃ... Etth ' ete pāpakā akusalā dhammā aparisesā nirujjhanti*. [MN.I.110].

3. *Ananuruddha-appaṭiviruddhass 'āvuso sā niṭṭhā. Na sā niṭṭhā anuruddha-paṭiviruddhassā 'ti.* MN.I. 65].

This is why the Buddha stated in no uncertain terms about self-reliance [*Tasmāt' ihānanda atta-dīpā viharatha atta-saraṇā anaññasaraṇā.* DN.II. 100]. The word *dīpa* in this context means an island or place of security which gives one a firm foot-hold. It means a safe, reliable position. It certainly **does not mean a lamp** as has often been mistranslated and misunderstood and too loudly uttered [See Dialogues of the Buddha II.108. We note with joy that The Long Discourses of the Buddha - Maurice Walshe - has got this translation brilliantly correct at p. 245]. It means that each one must acquire for himself this unassailable position and be not misled to seek it in another. And certainly not in those mortals who come from the midst of men, claiming that they have received a divine mandate. Any one who knows the Buddhist way of thinking and is familiar with Buddhist texts cannot possibly miss this allusion to *dīpa* as an island. This is how the Dhammapada, the indispensable hand book of the Buddhists re-affirms this idea.

*Uṭṭhānenappamādena saṃyamena damena ca  
Dīpaṃ kayirātha medhāvī yaṃ ogho nābhkīraṭi.* Dh. v. 25

The wise man, by stirring himself to activity,  
And by his vigilance, his restraint and self-control,  
Should make for himself an island  
Which no flood can shatter.

In the development of the spiritual life of the Buddhist, the complement to this idea of self-reliance is reliance on the *dhamma*. It cannot be reliance on any other idea or ideas, picked up at random from elsewhere : *dhamma-dīpā dhamma-saraṇā anaññasaraṇā.* [DN.II.100]. It would be quite clear to any serious-minded Buddhist that a truly Buddhist religious life is not built up by

piecing together fragments collected, particularly in moments of severe stress and strain in one's life, from diverse quarters during one's sojourning, east or west, north or south. If there occurs any idea of being religiously good, that goodness must necessarily be tied up with the Buddhist concept of salvation or release from the ills of *samsāra*. In other words, perfection of goodness in Buddhism is the attainment of Nibbana. There can be no meaningful concept of goodness besides it. In fact this goodness which is *nibbāna*-oriented, it would soon be realized, is what would be most desirable for the world. For it necessarily shows up all that is evil or *akusala* in man which is the outcome of what is believed to be the normal process of life in the world.

The Buddhist philosophical position is that unguarded human nature as we encounter it in the world around us, moves in certain directions which are damaging both to the individual and society. What we call the process of life in the world consists of fulfillment of basic needs like food, clothing and shelter on the physical plane, very knowingly referred to in Buddhist texts as *ghāsa-chādana-paramatā* [DN.I. 60 and MN.I.360], as well as the gratification of emotional needs like sex, etc. With these are closely tied up our reactions to sense stimuli which come from the living world through the eye and the ear etc., all of which are accepted as normal in the day to day run of life. But it is little realized that humans invariably exceed the approvable limits in their gratification, approvable to the extent of not damaging the interests either of oneself or of others. One could ill afford here not to be aware of the comprehensive sermon of the Buddha, given to his son Rāhula, in the Ambalaṭṭhikārāhulovāda Sutta of the Majjhimanikaya [MN.I. 414-420] which spells out this in great detail. Thus it runs.

This deed of mine which I now intend doing, says the Buddha to Rāhula, giving it as a yardstick of measurement, if it turns out to be harmful to me as well as to others, then it is indeed an unwholesome deed, generating unhappiness and bringing evil consequences in its wake [... *akusalaṃ idaṃ kāya-kammaṃ dukkhudrayaṃ dukkha-vipākaṃ'ti*. op. cit.416]. And he concludes, this indeed is

not to be done [*Evarūpaṃ te Rāhula kāyena kammaṃ sasakkaṃ na karaṇīyam.* op. cit. 415]. This is what is most characteristic of the three basic roots of evil, viz. greed, hatred and delusion. All action and conduct which damage both the nature of man and his well-being in life are rooted in these. Therefore it is their opposites which are constructive and conduce to peace and prosperity among men. That is what is conducive in the ultimate analysis to the emancipation of every man from the total round of ills of *saṃsāric* existence [*Alobho kusalamūlaṃ adoso kusalamūlaṃ amoho kusalamūlaṃ. Idaṃ vuccat 'āvuso kusalamūlaṃ ... diṭṭh 'eva dhamme dukkhassantakaro hoti.* [MN.I.47].

Such a process of change which man himself has to initiate is looked upon in Buddhism as *bhāvanā*, i.e. progressive culture or development : *kusalaṃ bhāveti* = nurtures what is wholesome. A good disciple of the Buddha, i.e. an *ariya-sāvaka* who is endowed with *saddhā* is said to be on the correct track of rejecting or keeping away from what is evil and unwholesome and nurturing their opposites : *akusalaṃ pajahati kusalaṃ bhāveti*. This gives him purity and wholesomeness of character: *suddhaṃ attānaṃ pariharati* [AN.IV.109]. The Samaṇamaṇḍika Sutta more specifically says that a bhikkhu regulates and cultures his activities through thought, word and deed : *Idha Thapati bhikkhu kāya-duccaritaṃ pahāya kāya - sucaritaṃ bhāveti vacī-duccaritaṃ pahāya vacī-sucaritaṃ bhāveti mano-duccaritaṃ pahāya mano-sucaritaṃ bhāveti* [MN.II. 26]. It is also looked upon as *sikkhā*, i.e. discipline or training. If one is able to well and truly understand that greed and hatred are the outcome of our misdirected responses to the stimuli we get from the world outside, then it is not that difficult to understand that salvation of man or his release from these failings of life cannot be attained through prayer or supplication, i.e. through the assistance of an external agency. It has necessarily to be a personal process of correct judgement and consequent action which means self-correction and self-development.

Now let us ask ourselves as to where or in what fields this development has

to be undertaken. Seeing as untenable the postulate of the presence in man of a cosmic or divine counterpart, i.e. soul or *ātman*, Buddhism renders the complex process of human life, not as one single existence from birth to death, with the possibility or not of its return to divinity, but as a vast and complex continuity of existence or *saṃsāra* which means 'a continuous rolling on'. Or more precisely, *samsāra* implies the existence severally of infinite chains of existences for each and every one. See how vividly and precisely the Samyutta Nikaya presents this idea as *Anamataggo 'yaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjā-nīvaraṇānam sattānaṃ taṇhā-saṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsarataṃ* [SN.III.149,151]. This means : Infinitely long is this life processes of beings whose 'vision is obscured by ignorance and who are fettered by craving and are consequently rolling on, with each one gathering his or her own momentum in *saṃsāra*. Its first beginning is hardly visible or discernible.

Life, sorted out either as one single facet from birth to death or as the continuously endless chain, is the result of the mutual interplay of body and mind : *kāya* and *citta* [or *mano* or *viññāṇa*]. In the long-range vision of *saṃsāra*, it is referred to as the interplay of *nāma-rūpa* and *viññāṇa*. In our opinion, the theory of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* is basically the explanation of this vital Buddhist concept of *samsāra*. To any and every form of Buddhist thinking, *saṃsāra* with its unmistakable reality of life after death, was a vital concept. One has to concede it at least to the thinking of the Buddha and see it in the basic teachings which are held undoubtably as Buddha's own.

Otherwise what sense do these usages in Buddhism mean : 1. *dukkhā jāti punappunam* [= Being born again and again is painful.], 2. *ayam antimā jāti* [= This is my last birth.], 3. *anekajāti-saṃsāraṃ* [= This *saṃsāra* with its numerous births], 4. *khīṇā jāti* [= Being born is ended.], 5. *natthi 'dāni punabbhavo* [= Now there is no more being born again.] 6. *nāparaṃ itthattāyā 'ti pajānāti* [= Knows that there is no more going to another state like this.] 7. *saṃsaram hi nirayam agacchisam* [= In my journeying in this life process, I 've been to the suffering

states of *niraya*.] 8. *So anekavihitam pubbenivāsam anussarati seyyathidaṃ ekam 'pi jātiṃ dve 'pi jātiyo...*[= He recollects diverse former states of existence ...].

In a truly Buddhist theory of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* or Causal Genesis which undeniably has its relevance to *saṃsāra*, see the beautiful interplay of *nāmarūpa* on *viññāṇa* and *viññāṇa* on *nāmarūpa*: *Seyyathāpi āvuso dve naḷakalāpiyo aññam aññaṃ nissāya tiṭṭheyyuṃ evaṃ eva kho āvuso nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*. [SN.II.114 = Just as O monk, two bundles of reeds stand leaning on each other, dependent on each other, in the same way *viññāṇa* is supported by *nāmarūpa* and *nāmarūpa* supported by *viññāṇa*.].

This complete and comprehensive Buddhist thesis is enunciated with incredible clarity and lucidity in the Mahānidāna Sutta of the Digha Nikaya [DN. II. 63f]. It is our considered opinion that the translation of this in the Dialogues of the Buddha [Vol. II. 61] is misleadingly blurred. Therefore we attempt here a fresh translation of the relevant portion of the Pali text.

"O Ānanda, thus far there is birth, decay and death, and passing away from this existence, and being born in another; thus far an appellation or reference to by name, thus far an allusion to a doer or a doing, thus far conventional reckoning of persons, thus far is the range of activity of wisdom; thus far does the rolling on of the wheel of life go for the postulation of a life like the present one. It is only so far as name and form [*nāma-rūpa*] co-exists with consciousness" [i.e. *viññāṇa* of the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* which implies in our opinion *saṃsāric* consciousness or *viññāṇa-sota*. See DN.III. 105].

While there is this unquestionable interplay of body and mind, both towards the prolongation of a being's continuance in *saṃsāra* [as *paccaya*] or towards its termination or [*nirodha*], the Buddhists for the most part appear to be concentrating only on the mind [*citta*] when they speak of *bhāvanā*. This perhaps



has been further aided by the general use in common parlance of the word meditation [which stands for the exercise of the mind] as the equivalent for the Buddhist concept of *bhāvanā*. This, we venture to call an error of judgement. There can be no development, culture or discipline in Buddhism except in terms of both body and mind [*kāya-bhāvanā* and *citta-bhāvanā*], a concept which is thoroughly discussed in the Mahāsaccaka Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.I. 237-251] by the Buddha himself.

*Kāya-bhāvanā* would amount to the culturing, training, or educating of the body, i.e. the sense organs of the eye, ear, etc. in terms of *anicca dukkha* and *anatta*. Thus responses to the external stimuli of the world, guided by the awareness of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and soullessness would bring about restraint in the process of sensory reaction or *indriyaśamvara*. This is also called *indriyesu gutta-dvāratā* or keeping one's sense faculties under watch and vigil. This would be a great step in the direction of *kāya-bhāvanā* which reduces the emotional imbalances to which our unguarded worldling can be subject, causing great stress and pain of mind. This is what is referred to as the mind being overwhelmed: *cittaṃ pariyādāya tiṭṭhati*.

This being so, according to the Buddha, a wise disciple [*sutavā ariya-sāvako*] does not allow a pleasurable sensation to generate within him an intense attachment to that pleasure[... *sutavato ariyasāvakassa uppajjati sukhā vedanā. So sukhāya vedanāya phuttho samāno no sukha-sārāgī hoti na sukha-sārāgitaṃ āpajjati*.MN.1. 239]. The result is the pleasurable feeling which is experienced does not overpower his mind because his body is already adequately cultured [*Tassa kho esā Aggivessana uppannā 'pi sukhā vedanā na cittaṃ pariyādāya tiṭṭhati bhāvitattā kāyassa*. Ibid.]. Thus what is basically implied here is a regulation and control of the process of bodily reaction. Here one sees in this Buddhist explanation a physical origin and a physical cure for a possibly resultant mental stress.

On the other hand, the ability to withstand the assaults of painful mental

situations would be the reward of mind culture or *citta-bhāvanā*. It is these two together, i.e. *kāyabhāvanā* and *citta-bhāvanā*, culture of the body and culture of the mind, which gives poise in life to the man in society. They produce a man with stability of character. For this total Buddhist goodness is the product of a process of self-culture, a culture not only of the five external sense organs, but also of the mind internally [as the sixth.]. At the completion of this total process of culture, the disciple is said to enjoy undiluted inward bliss. [*So iminā ariyena indriya-saṃvarena samannāgato ajjhataṃ abyāseka-sukhaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti.* MN.I.181]. What truly would be called goodness in Buddhism would be achieved at this stage. For the real Buddhist judgement of the things of the world in terms of *anicca dukkha* and *anatta* makes of the Buddhist disciple a man of virtue. It could not be otherwise.

There is yet another process of development through which a good Buddhist disciple, monk or layman, attains the perfection of his character. It is a much larger and much more extensive and comprehensive one. It is the system of threefold *sikkhā*. As a system [*sikkhattaya*], it is more specific and its constituents [*tisso sikkhā*] imply direct involvement in the process of development [*sikkhā*]. This is the most comprehensive disciplinary machinery of Buddhism. The interesting reference in the Anguttara Nikaya to the Vajjiputtaka monk who expressed to the Buddha his inability to guard himself in terms of every rule of the Pātimokkha [AN.I.230] tells us of the Buddha's advice to that monk to discipline himself in the alternative, in terms of the three *sikkhā* [*Tasmāt ' iha tvaṃ bhikkhu tīsu sikkhāsu sikkhassu adhisīla-sikkhāya adhicitta-sikkhāya adipaññā-sikkhāya.* Ibid.]. In this same context it is made abundantly clear that the threefold culture through *sikkhā* contains all the refinement and development envisaged under the regulations [*sikkhāpada*] of the Pātimokkha [*Sādhikaṃ idaṃ bhikkhave diyaḍḍha-sikkhāpada-sataṃ anvaddha-māsaṃ uddesaṃ āgacchati yattha atthakāmā kulaputtā sikkhanti. Tisso imā bhikkhave sikkhā yatth' etaṃ sabbaṃ samodhānaṃ gacchati.* op.cit. 231].

These three items of *sīla samādhi paññā*, let it be noted clearly at the very outset, constitute a three tiered development, one succeeding the other. They are really spiralling upward, because each succeeding one is an ascent over the former. The Buddhist texts are very definite about this. That alone, we believe, makes sense. The Anguttara Nikaya [AN.III. 15] says that there never is a possibility that one who does not perfect his *sīla* or moral rectitude would perfect his *samādhi* or composure of mind. First things first. Thus without a perfection of *samādhi* there would likewise be no perfection of *paññā* or wisdom. They imply successive stages of a spiritual ascent. To speak of a concurrent or parallel development of these would be not to know the full implications of these in Buddhism. It is no secret that concepts like *bhāvanā*, *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are some of the most misused and misunderstood in the later history of the religion, in the hands of uninitiated and uninstructed persons [*assutavā puthujjano*]. It is considerably damaging when such persons assume the role of teachers and instructors.

We note with regret that there is considerable confusion regarding these three stages of religious culture. It is a confusion, inherited from where or when, we do not know. What is indeed amazing here is that we are in fact forewarned about this to some extent in one of the very renowned suttas of the Majjhima Nikaya, viz. the Cullavedalla [MN.I.299-305]. This sutta is delivered by one of the most distinguished ladies in Buddhist history. She is none other than Theri Dhammadinnā. She tells us via her admonition to her erstwhile husband Visākha that while the three *sikkhā* contain within them the Noble Eightfold Way, the Noble Eightfold Way does not contain the three *sikkhā*, the term *khandha* being used in the sutta for these three divisions [*Na kho āvuso Visākha ariyena aṭṭhaṅgikena maggena tayo khandhā saṅgahitā. Tīhi ca kho āvuso Visākha khandhehi ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo saṅgahito. op. cit. 301*].

It is all well known that the Noble Eight-fold Way as the *magga* begins with *sammā-diṭṭhi* and ends with *sammā-samādhi*. It does not contain within itself any

reference to the category known as *paññā*. Then it is obvious that the *magga* as the carrier only goes up to a specific point and no more. But the way is set for further journeying, journeying on the spiritual track, with no fear of a loss of way. About the path to Nibbāna and the infallible attainment of that goal, the Buddhist texts are specific and definite when they say *niyato sambodhi-parāyano* [MN.III.277 and SN.V. 343] which means 'definitely ending up in enlightenment'. Therefore one has not to make a frantic search for *paññā* of the *tisso sikkhā* within the *magga*. The Cullavedalla Sutta, sensibly studied, precludes us from doing this. So does the Mahācattārīsaka Sutta [MN.III 71-78] which dwells on the same theme. It tells us that *sammā-samādhi* generates *sammā-ñāṇa* and that *sammā-ñāṇa* is followed by *sammā-vimutti* [*sammā-samādhissa sammā-ñāṇaṃ pahoti sammā-ñāṇassa sammā-vimutti pahoti*]. The sutta adds these two to the *magga* and consequently we have the disciple who is released, through ten stages, namely the *arahant* [*Iti kho bhikkhave aṭṭhaṅga-samannāgato sekho paṭipado dasaṅga-samannāgato arahā hoti*. op.cit.76].

Thus the *magga* within the *tisso sikkhā* is part within the whole. Correct vision or *sammā-diṭṭhi*, on the other hand, is a pre-requisite which together with *sammā-saṅkappa* precedes and heralds the *sīla* category of the *magga* which consists of *sammā-vācā sammā-kammanto sammā-ājīvo*. While correct vision or *sammā-diṭṭhi* shares of the nature of wisdom [*yā ca sammā-diṭṭhi yo ca sammā-saṅkappo ime dhammā paññā-kkhandhe saṅgahītā' ti*. MN.I. 301], no sensible Buddhist, or any serious student of Buddhism, could so much surrender sanity as to identify *paññā* of the *tisso sikkhā* with *sammā-diṭṭhi* of Eightfold Way. [It makes little sense to say that *paññā* is a higher developed stage of *sammā-diṭṭhi*]. *Paññā* here is a completely different category of superior Buddhist wisdom, wisdom which finally liberates a *saṃsāric* being from the *āsava* or defilements which bind him to the ills of life in *saṃsāra*.. This is why final liberation in Buddhism is always referred to as *āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto-vimuttim paññā-vimuttim diṭṭh' eva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati*. [MN.I. 71, 289, 367]. It is the liberation of the mind of *āsava* through

wisdom or *paññā*. It can arise only in a *samāhita citta*, in the perfection of *sammā-samādhī*. This again is the outcome of the grooming in *sīla* through *sammā-vācā sammā-kammanto* and *sammā-ājīvo*.

One of the finest presentations of the goodness which a true Buddhist disciple is required to develop in himself is witnessed in the Anguttara Nikaya Lonaphala Vagga [AN.I. 249]. Here the Buddha himself is seen saying that in the case of a particular type of person, even a small misdeed done by him [[*appamattakam' pi pāpaṃ kammaṃ kataṃ*]] would lead him to *niraya* or painful states of degeneration. On the other hand, yet another type of person would be able to wear out in this very life time the effects of the same type of deed without even the slightest residue [*diṭṭhadhamma-vedaniyaṃ hoti nanu' pi khāyati kiṃ bahud'eva.*]. The explanation offered for this difference in the operation of the *karmic* law is the difference in the development of the character of the two persons concerned.

Seven different words are used as attributes to refer to the character of these persons, the same set of words used for one being negated in the case of the other. Four of these words interestingly carry the word *bhāvita-* with them, implying possession of culture or development. We have already had the occasion to discuss them in terms of *bhāvita-kāya* and *bhāvita-citta*. In their gradual order they are 1. culture of personality on the basis of physical restraint or *bhāvita-kāya*. 2. culture of moral rectitude or *bhāvita-sīla*. 3. culture of the composure of the mind or *bhāvita-citta* and 4. culture or nurture of wisdom. i.e. correct understanding and judgement, or *bhāvita-pañña*. The other three refer to magnanimity, and elimination of pettiness and delimitation in one's character, in one's thinking and acting. They all converge on the concept of philanthropy and large-heartedness. The words used are 5. *aparitto* or not being delimited or circumscribed, 6. *mahattā* [Skt. *mahātman* and in Sinhala *mahatmaya* or *mahattaya*] or lofty in character and gentlemanly [and gentle-womanly], 7. *appamāna-vihāri* or extensively philanthropic. This implies triumph over delimiting

or circumscribing human weaknesses like greed and hatred [*pamāṇa-karaṇānaṃ rāgādīnam abhāvena*. AA. II. 361].

We followed this line of argument centered on goodness and greatness through the process of spiritual development of the Buddhist to show that goodness in Buddhism is a personal development and a personal achievement. This development proceeds with equal validity through both corrective processes of *sīla* and *samādhi* in Buddhism. One should here be adequately sensitive to the reference to *sīla* and *samādhi* as corrective processes of personal development. It is correction of oneself to be in total harmony with the world we live in, with no conflict whatsoever on account of likes or dislikes [*anurodha-virodha*]. The likes and dislikes or greed and hatred conflict of man is witnessed and reckoned with from the first beginnings of religious culture in Buddhism. At the level of *sīla*, the first two injunctions of the *pañca-sīla*, i.e. *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* and *adinnādānā veramaṇī* are indicative of this. They refer to destruction of life and dispossessing others of what rightly belongs to them. Such actions are prompted through likes and dislikes or greed and hatred, depending on the intensity of feeling at the particular time of action. Coming up to the level of *samādhi* or the level of *jhānas*, the pre-*jhānic* purge of the mind which one is required to possess in the elimination of the five *nīvaraṇas* again reveals this 'likes-dislikes conflict' in the area of *abhijjhā* and *vyāpāda*. The Khaggavisāṇa Sutta of the Suttanipāta [Sn. v. 42] expresses this idea beautifully when it says : 'Completely at ease in all the four directions of the world, one runs not into conflict with another' [*cātuddiso appaṭigho ca hoti*].

One is completely satisfied with whatever comes one's way to serve the daily needs [*santussamāno itarītarena*]. He faces all perils with manliness, whether they are from within or without [*parissayānaṃ sahitā achambhī*]. This results in man's attainment of an unassailable stature of greatness. This is what enables the Buddhist to make the challenging claim [*sīhanāda* or lion's roar] that he who attains the religious goal in Buddhism [*niṭṭhā*] is well and truly not torn between

likes and dislikes [*Ananuruddha-appaṭiviruddhass' āvuso sā nitṭhā na sā nitṭhā anuruddha-paṭiviruddhassā ' ti.* MN.I. 65]. It is attained by the man who is primarily virtuous, then composed in body and mind and consequently wise. That man of the world, in his accomplishment, transcends the world.

## (6) Wisdom for the World

- Buddhism's Contribution

The spectacular achievement in the teaching of the Buddha is the verifiably correct identification and the diagnosis of the ills of the humans as well as the prescription by him of a way of life to them for their eradication. And placing this triumph in philosophical analysis in the context of world history, this was at least half a millennium before the appearance of the major surviving religions of the world today. It is also to be remembered that according to Buddhism, this total process of *salvation of mankind* is personally effected by each one [men, women and children themselves], without the intermediary of an external agency who dwells outside their pale of existence. Nevertheless, the eradication of the ills of life and the consequent salvation of the humans imply a process of transcendence. This is the contrast which the Buddhists have to constantly keep in mind, the contrast between the *lokiya* and *lokuttara* or the mundane and the supramundane. This is a realistic and down to earth differentiation and requires no assistance of any profound theology. This is a fact which would be established and proved here and now, in this very life [*ditṭh' eva dhamme*] as the Buddha himself demonstrated through his own life.

This places before the Buddhist two realities, the reality of life in the world and the reality of the state in which it is superseded. To the Buddhist, both these are real, existing states. Hence they are truths or *saccas*, the first and the third of the four Noble Truths [*cattāri ariyasaccāni*], viz. *dukkha* and *nirodha*. To the

Buddhist, the life in the world is not **fiction** [*māyā* or illusion] as against a **reality** [*paramattha*] beyond this. It is, more or less, man's inherited lot as a *saṃsāric* being to suffer in living it, to suffer physically on account of disease, old age and death. And also suffer mentally the stresses and strains on account of self-acquired likes and dislikes of the humans as well as partialities and prejudices in which they find themselves desperately plunged in. Buddhism sensitizes man to these and in the process teach him the need to eliminate them by transcending the very process of living.

It would profit us to take note here of the fact that early Buddhism seems to uphold the wisdom of the ancient psycho-ethical concept of man in the definition : *Porāṇā pana bhaṇanti manassa ussannatāya manussā* = Ancients say the humans are called *manussa* on account of the elevated or lofty nature of their minds [VvA. 18 and KhA. 123] as against the more legendary one of presenting man as the offspring of the First Man or Manu : *Manuno apaccā ' ti manussā*. [KhA.123]. Man, by this sublimity of his mind or power of reasoning [*manassa ussannatāya*] is gifted with the capacity to choose or to reject the one in preference to the other, choose what is wholesome and contributory to his well-being [i.e. *kusala*] and reject what is unwholesome or detrimental [i.e. *akusala*]. This is the normal run of religious culture in Buddhism, which insulates him against moral and spiritual disaster [*akaraṇīyo māraṣṣa akaraṇīyo pāpimato*. AN. IV.109].

The Anguttara Nikaya enumerates seven factors as the bases of this culture: *Ariya-sāvako akusalaṃ pajahati kusalaṃ bhāveti sāvajjaṃ pajahati anavajjaṃ bhāveti suddhaṃ attānaṃ pariharati ...* etc. [AN. IV.109-111]. The Samyutta Nikaya [SN.III. 8-9] describes the situation very vividly and in a very convincing manner, saying that the adoption of evil ways [... *akusale dhamme upasampajja viharato*], leads to misery in life [*dukkho vihāro*], to anguish and tribulation [*saviḡhāto saupāyāso sapariḷāho*], and entailing painful consequences in the life beyond [*duggati pāṭikarikhā*]. For this reason, the Buddha is presented as



praising the rejection of evil and the adoption of virtue : *Tasmā bhagavā akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānaṃ vaṇṇeti ... kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ upasampadaṃ vaṇṇeti.* SN.III.8].

Thus correctness of choice as the basis of action turns out to be the burden of Buddhist thinking. Whether it be the oft-quoted lines *sabba-pāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasampadā* [Dhp. v. 183] or it be the inquiry of a Cakkavatti king on the collapse of his empire, wisely worded as *Kim bhante kusalaṃ kiṃ akusalaṃ kiṃ sāvajjaṃ kiṃ anavajjaṃ kiṃ sevitabbaṃ kiṃ na sevitabbaṃ kiṃ me kayiramānaṃ dīgharattaṃ ahitāya dukkhāya assa kim vā pana me kayiramānaṃ dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāya assā' ti.* [DN.III. 61], it implies a direction of policy, a reorganization of the pattern of living, moving over from the mundane to the more sublime or transcendental. There could be no other way of thinking or acting. This indeed is the only passage from *saṃsāra* to *nibbāna*.

In one of the loveliest contexts in Buddhist history, the Buddha expresses these wise and kind words of counsel in the Suttanipata [Sn. vv. 1120-23]. A very aged monk of Brahmanic origin who was Piṅgiya by name, [said to be a hundred and twenty years in age according to the Commentary] and had joined the Buddhist ranks late in his years, comes to the Buddha and reveals his true position both with regard to his age and decrepitude. Bemoaning the inadequacy of his spiritual attainments up to that point, he wishes to obtain from the Buddha an answer to his problem of transcending the ills of life here and now [*jāti-jarāya idha vipphānaṃ*]. He expresses his present plight with such vividness and with such veracity that one could hardly remain unmoved : ' My vision is not clear and my hearing is not efficient. Not comprehending your message, let not my life at death be an empty one. Do tell me Sir, how I may transcend birth and decay in this very life.' The Buddha's message to him in brief is this: ` Reject form, i.e. the physical body, if you choose to eliminate birth : *Jahassu rūpaṃ apunabbhavāya* ' [Sn. v. 1121].

It is followed by the request to give up *taṇhā* or craving. The prompting for

the abandonment of craving comes from the awareness and conviction which results from a closer look [*pekkhamāno*] at life wherein one sees that those immersed in greed and attachment [*taṇhādhīpannā*] are victims of anguish [*santāpa-jāte*] due to maladjustment on the psychical plane of existence. At the same time, a Buddhist has to become aware of the fact that the process of *saṃsāric* existence where ills of life like decay, disease and death prevail, is perpetuated by the force of craving or *taṇhā*. Therefore on the physical plane one must necessarily recognize the presence of physical bodily deterioration, of which Piṅgiya has already admitted that he is a victim, as a bye-product of *taṇhā* [*taṇhādhīpanne jarasā parete*]. For the transcendence of ills on both these planes, the Buddha advises Piṅgiya to give up *taṇhā*. Indeed that alone transcends birth : *jahassu taṇhaṃ apunabbhavāya*. Towards the attainment of this goal, a great deal of self-adjustment is needed : an adjustment of values, of attitudes and a great surrender of customary ways. This is in fact what the Buddha meant when he said that his teaching as a way of life requires an up-stream movement, a movement against the current: *paṭisotagāmiṃ* [See Ariyapariyesana Sutta at MN.I. 168.]

Consequently in Buddhism, man's salvation depends on his adjustment to the world in which he lives. He has to regulate his reactions to the stimuli of the world of senses which keep bombarding him all the time, from birth to death. 'Seeing a form with his eye or hearing a sound with his ear ...' say the Buddhist texts [*cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā ... sotena saddam sutvā ... MN. I.180*], a diligent disciple grasps them not. The world in which we live is the launching pad from which the take off to the transcendental realms is effected. Or putting it differently, 'On the journey to *nibbāna*, one does traverse the highways of society.' An intelligent analysis of the Noble Eight-fold Path would convince one of the truth of this. At the core of Buddhist ethics obviously lies the correction of man's attitude to man, for his actions and reactions are primarily in relation to those around him, even inanimate things of the world having some kind of relationship to persons and *vice versa*.

This ethical correction of man applies to both primary evils of greed and hatred [*lobha* and *dosa* or *abhijjhā* and *vyāpāda*]. The threefold incorrect bodily action, the fourfold incorrect verbal action and the threefold processes of thought of the ten *akusala-kamma* or evil conduct also imply this concern for correct interpersonal relationships. The Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhulovāda Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.I. 414-420] discusses this at a level which reminds one of transcendental values. All the same, these considerations are not unrelated to down-to-earth realities. All evil traits verging on ill-will, i.e. *vyāpāda*, *vihimsā* and *paṭigha* are shown to have their origin in man's maladjustment to man. Self-correction by man in this sphere safeguards for man this primary need, viz. the security of person. That is the right of every man to live. Founded on the basic awareness that one's own life is dear to everyone more than any other [*Evaṃ piyo puthu attā pasesaṃ*. SN.I.75], one is called upon to respect the right of every other to safeguard his or her own life [*Tasmā na hiṃse paraṃ attakāmo*. *ibid.*].

The process of living also carries with it the accessories of life, viz. property. We are impressed by the Sāleyyaka Sutta's reference to them with remarkable insight as *vittūpakaraṇa*, i.e. possessions and means, or possessions as means of livelihood [MN.I.285 ff.]. The respect for another's property or the willingness to regard it as the basis of his sustenance, prevents one who is endowed with an ethical consciousness from dispossessing another of his legitimate belongings. We should note here how the Commentary to the above referred sutta describes property with even greater insight as the source of his joy : *tutṭhi-jananaṃ parikkhāra-bhaṇḍaṃ*. These two items of fundamental human rights relating to life and to property, with their universal extensiveness, form the core of Buddhist lay ethics. Speaking in terms of religious culture, they are potent enough to assail the primary roots of evil in man, viz. greed and hatred [*lobha* and *dosa*]. Thus they also take their place as items 1 and 2 of the Buddhist *pañca-sīla* or layman's code of basic ethics. Suttas like the Sāleyyaka and Verañjaka [MN.I. 285 ff.] show that these ethics, in their breach, constitute vicious behavior or evil conduct [*visama-cariyā* or *adhamma-cariyā*] in society, leading to degeneracy of human

life, here and hereafter.

It is this universality of *pañca-sīla* which makes the Buddhists recommend it to all mankind, irrespective of the differences in social and political ideologies. The non-fulfillment of the ethics contained therein leads to corrosion of life in this very existence or as the Dhammapada puts it `digs up his roots here itself' [*idh' ev' eso lokasmim mūlaṃ khaṇati attano*. Dh. v. 247]. The Cakkavatti king of Buddhist tradition insists on their observance when he says to all those who come under his domain that `Life should not be destroyed [*Pāṇo na hantabbo*] etc., irrespective of the political creed they uphold, whatever it be [*yathā-bhuttañca bhujjatha*. DN.II.173; III. 62]. Obviously, brand names like democracy or communism which loom large in our minds today mattered very little to the Buddhists whose total vision of human goodness overrode those petty divisions born of egoistic arrogance, both at individual and national levels. This is clearly seen in suttas like the Mahāsudassana and Cakkavattisīhanāda which deal with the religio-political organization of the Cakkavatti king [See DN.II. 196-199 and DN.III. 58-79].

In Buddhism what would be called the essentially religious life, not the mere acceptance of or conversion to the faith which is referred to as *pāṇ'upetaṃ saraṇaṃ gato* [MN.II 145, 213], begins thereafter with the taking upon oneself of the ethical injunctions of the *pañca-sīla* in their true spirit. The Mahāsakuludāyī Sutta speaks of Buddhist disciples who giving up their higher life as monks return to lay life as taking upon themselves and living in accordance with the *pañcasīla*. In doing so, they remain in the status of *ārāmika* and *upāsaka*, by which are meant the more earnest and dedicated lay disciples [... *te ārāmika-bhūtā vā upāsaka-bhūtā vā pañcasu sikkhāpadesu samādāya vattanti.*] [MN. 11. 5]. Many references in the Therīgāthā call upon those in lay life who wish to avert the displeasures and discomforts of life to choose to be guided by the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *saṅgha* and take upon themselves the moral precepts, i.e. *saraṇāgamana* and *sīlasamādāna*.

*Sace bhāyasi dukkhassa sace te dukkhaṃ appiyam  
 upehi buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ dhammaṃ saṅghaṃ ca tādinaṃ  
 samādiyāhi sīlāni taṃ te atthāya hehiti.*

Thig. 249 & 288

For peace and harmony and social well-being in the world these basic rights of life and property [more specifically referred to today as fundamental human rights] have to be universally respected. The disrespect for these by any single individual or any single group sets in motion a series of events. Obviously they are action taken to safeguard the first or the second or both together. Manifestations of this type of defensive action, relative to the degree of disregard for the above discussed basic human rights, can certainly appear offensive and threatening to those very rights which are being championed. This is why universally extensive honest acceptance of the *pañcasīla*, or basic human rights in other words, is needed for international and inter-religious peace. Not the demand to wage holy wars in defence of fanciful action and behavior of sectarian groups, religious or otherwise. This call for unity in the name of religion, in support of internationally undefendable or humanistically insupportable lines of action, would [and should] look blatantly unacceptable in the eyes of the divine, who must necessarily be above board in his patronage of humanity.

Two millennia and a half have passed since Buddhism offered this charter to mankind for its healthy growth and progressive march, for mankind as a whole and not for its petty and militarily [or industrially or economically] glorious encampments as super powers. Should man's insatiable desire for supremacy to bring mankind under the banner of one single religion or one political ideology lead to an insane rape of man ? In both these areas one often sees frantic attempts at welding together of even unrelated fragments, merely for the love of an impressive array. But these attempts at unification are also seen blowing up in volcanic explosions under the slightest provocation. On the other hand, should not the wisdom of man, if he is believed to have any at all, be diverted first to the

establishment of a kingdom of man on earth, where man is worthy to rule man, decentralized to any desirable extent, on account of his primary virtue of mutual respect.

This is what the Buddhists would offer to the world as *mettā* or *maitrī*, universal loving kindness [i.e. friendliness towards one another without reservations of any sort] for practice among themselves, one and all, in a universally extensive manner.

## (7) Welcoming the New Year or the New Century?

A people with an identity of their own do invariably reflect that distinctness in their thought and action. There is every possibility of this being pursued with offence to none, group or individual, by whatever yardstick one measures such a line of action. This depends of course, entirely on the sanity of the philosophy on which this distinctness of a people or country is based. Aggression, arrogance and avarice certainly have to be ruled out of such a universally benevolent system of thinking. People of Sri Lanka whose culture is deeply rooted in Buddhism should certainly rank very high in this category. Observations of outsiders who show no traces whatsoever of vested interest, made with perfect detachment from very ancient times to the modern, amply corroborate this. Professor John Lindsay Opie, writing in Roloff Beny's **Island Ceylon**, as late as 1972 says:

' The unity as well as the continuity of the old life produced by a handful of simple principles. A superior religion, Buddhism, in its Theravada expression of well-nigh Grecian restraint and purity, which conferred effective meaning on every department of life. Theocratic kingship clarified by the Buddhist notion of the Cakravartin, righteous and pacific monarch. A modified system of caste with

social but not religious sanction. And a closed agricultural economy based on an astonishingly complex system of irrigation, of canals, enormous reservoirs and artificial water-works of every kind. Together, these axioms and their deductions led to a level of rich prosperity and to long unbroken tracts of peace, inspite of the frequent skirmishes and palace squabbles which explain the reputation of Lanka, even among the disabused Chinese travellers of the past, as the very 'land without sorrow.' [p.25]

Therefore as an year draws to a close and we set our thoughts on the advent of another, let our remarks and observations on it resound and reverberate with Buddhist values which are vitally the back-bone of our people and our coutry. The world at large, with its evident sanity and inellectual honesty, does not seem to lose sight of the fact that Buddhist culture with its vastness both across time and space, over almost the whole of Asia for more than twenty-five centuries, is not only something to reckon with but is also something which should be hopefully retrieved. The contribution which Buddhism made to countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq well before the advent of Christianity, as recorded by the Islamic historian Abu'l - Rayhan Muhammad al-Biruni more than a thousand years ago [For more details see Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Vol. IV. Fasc.I. p.21ff.], and substantiated by archaeological evidence even today, should serve as a model for the functioning of any culture, any where. That makes a live phenomenon of culture, guiding and directing our lives as humans as we live it.

Looking at the process of the passage of man through time the Buddhists make this very interesting observation which comes to us from the Samyutta Nikaya.

The hours pass by. Nights drive us ever on.  
Stages of life in turn abandon us. K.S. I. p.4

*Accenti kālā tarayanti rattiyo*  
*vayo-guṇā anupubbaṃ jahanti.* S.I. p.3

What this means is that our lives which we choose to call our own and the world we live in are both incessant processes which are at work. We cannot call a halt to the nature or the functions of the world. In order to avoid conflict in our lives we have primarily to make the changes ourselves, and within ourselves. And this we must do, here and now, while we come to grips with life. The antithesis of a here and a hereafter [Sinhala - *melova paralova*] is not truly Buddhist. My emphasis here is deliberate. But it must be remembered the denial is of the antithesis, i.e. the apparent assumption as though there were only two worlds or states to reckon with. There is absolutely no question about the idea of a life after or *paralova*. It is an incalculable string of lives one has to face, all linked together. What is to be emphasised is the multiplicity of such states of existence, using the plural of the word *paralova*. *Paralova* implies a whole chain in the likeness of the present one, propelled by it and cast in its mould.

That this restructuring and correcting of life must be done with urgency and maximum efficiency is hinted at in the line 'Stages of life in turn abandon us.' To the Buddhist, if reckoning of time in this context [*accenti kālā tarayanti rattiyo*] has any meaning or significance, it is on account of this urgency to fulfil a mission with minimum delay. Delay and neglect, according to Buddhist philosophy, or better we say according to the Buddhist way of thinking, are virtual death. We have either died almost in our cradles or are not truly born at all. If we have not learned this from the Dhammapada when it says *ye pamattū yathā matū* [Dhp. v. 21] = 'The heedless are like unto the dead', and have not put ourselves on the right gear so that we drive our carriage of life to maximum benefit, then we have to lament that we have heard all our sermons in vain.

Let us now focus attention on another Buddhist theme which has a relevance to the present discussion. Talking very briefly of the past, present and future, the Buddha says:

They make no lamentation o'er the past,



They yearn not after that which is not come,  
 By what now is do they maintain themselves:  
 Hence comes it that they look serene of hue. K.S.I. p.8

*Atītaṃ nānusocanti nappajappanti nāgataṃ*  
*Paccuppanna yāpentī tena vaṇṇo pasīdati. S.1.p. 5*

The negative of this is put even more effectively saying that the fools wither away, pining over the dead yesterdays and unborn tomorrows, withering away like the bamboo, cut down green.

*Anāgatapajappāya atītaṃ nānusocanā*  
*Etena bālā sūssanti nalo 'va harito luto. S.1.p. 5*

These statements with regard to the validity of time reckoning have in fact, when examined more closely, a third-dimensional religio-ethical significance. They really constitute the Buddha's reply to a question as to how the forest-dwelling monks living in tranquillity fare so well, subsisting on one meal a day [S.I.p.5 quoted above]. The bare truth of this is that the strain of time is on account of its stored up bulk and weight. Time must be allowed and given the freedom to wear itself out. It is in the sensible severance of the linkage [the real meaning of *viveka* in both Pali and Sinhala being this] of the present with its menacing partners, the past and the future.

While advocating a very practical and sensible approach to the immediate problems of day to day life, these words also seem to lay down a policy for a more stable philosophy which would elevate the quality of life both materially as well as in terms of extra-material values. To begin with, the reality and supremacy of the present moment is here emphatically announced. This immediately ties itself with the question of urgency which we discussed earlier. Moments, fruitlessly and unproductively allowed to drift away become the

property or stock-in-trade of the lamentable past. Here are recurrent inspiring refrains from the Buddhist books which stress the need for this alertness. ' Let no moment be wasted. = *Khaṇo ve mā upaccagā.*' [Dhp. v.315]. Highlighting the painful consequences of its neglect, it is said : Those who have wasted their precious moments or opportunities lament when they face the reality of their own decline. = *Khaṇatīṭā hi socanti nirayamhi samappitā.* [Ibid.]

This should make it clear to us that when the Buddha says ' They make no lamentation over the past ' there is absolutely no attempt to smuggle in any idea of being reconciled to the lot of one's past, or using a less meaningful phrase, one's fate. There is no surrendering here to a fatalistic theory of *karma*, or accepting without a tear in one's eye, what one is 'destined to suffer.' An unquestionably honest attempt should be made to harness the present moment profitably in every sense, so that when it passes over to a point instant which would be reckoned as past, its results would yield both profit and pleasure. That is the Buddhist norm in terms of which action would be declared good and bad. Here, I quote to you from the Dhammapada.

That deed is well done, when after having done it  
One repents not. And when, with joy and pleasure  
One reaps the fruit thereof.

*Tañ ca kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu yaṃ katvā nānutappati*  
*Yassa patīto sumano vipākaṃ paṭisevati.* Dhp. v. 68

With equal emphasis verse 67 of the same text supplements this idea by defining what would be termed bad action.

The wisdom of the Buddha's instruction about not lamenting over the past comes out more poignantly when we take the following into consideration. Not ignoring the oft-argued impact of society on the individual one has also to logically trace the behaviour pattern of society to the behaviour of guided or

misguided individuals who constitute that society, reckoning at the same time the accelerating power of their numerical strength. Thus, through pressure or persuasion, if it were possible to get individuals to be conscientiously responsible in their behaviour, there would be little need to grieve over the past. There should be the genuine consolation that whatever lapses there are either in the life of the society or of the individual, they are unavoidable sins of omission than of commission. There would also be the genuine consolation that in spite of the accelerated speed at which the society is moving, an endeavour would be made, benefiting from the experience already gained to avoid repeating in the present the mistakes of the past.

So, at any stage in the history of a people, if resolves and aspirations are to be made, it should be to plan and determine the activities of the present in such a way as to leave no room for regrets or remorse of the unborn tomorrow. Basic ingredients for this are correct and right action. That is why the Buddhist upholds that no correct or justifiable way of living will ever commence without correct views or judgement. Thought and action follow this. Now it should be clear why the Noble Eightfold Way, the one and the only way to release or *nirodha*, i.e. the *Ariya atthangika magga* begins with *sammā ditthi* and leads thereafter to *sammā samkappa*.

In Sri Lanka where we are ranked among the developing nations of the third world, many drastic changes are necessarily taking place every day. The world is reaching a stage of consciousness when, in the interest of humans, nature and environment have to be treated with great respect, because in polluting it man is polluting himself. According to Buddhism, this is true not only physically and materially but also psychically or spiritually or by whatever other name you choose to call this less recognised area of human life. The Buddhist would look upon this as the psychical corrosion that comes through greed and hatred, the unwillingness to share, and unwillingness to tolerate. This is a serious crime against society, the crime of polluting the social environment with drastic

consequences. This also causes serious imbalances in the world society and its disastrous consequences are being witnessed every day. The world can well afford to put into the pool a great deal more of love and generosity and redistribute it among those who urgently need to benefit from it.

The Sri Lankans, to whatever reforms they subscribe, reforms initiated from within or without, would do well to remember this. Old world monstrosities in the realm of thinking like affluence, power, aristocracy, leadership, supremacy and monopoly which lead to social discrimination and exploitation, internationally or within nations, have to be relentlessly rejected before we welcome another year or the twenty-first century. For victory breeds hatred [*jayam veram pasavati* and the vanquished lies dejected: *dukkham seti parajito*. Dhp. v. 201]. In a truly Buddhist atmosphere one can steer clear of these. Only one should not be fooled by Utopian schemes which neither correctly analyse nor assess true human nature, its strength and its failings. For the efficacy of the remedy, i.e. contemplated reforms will seriously depend on the diagnosis of the disease and the competence of the reformists to handle it.

This is what prompted the late Dr. Raphaelo M. Salas, the U.N. Expert on Population, to declare at the University of Colombo - Special Convocation at the BMICH in August 1979 that Sri Lanka should give to the world as its message for the twenty-first century this utterance of the wise old sage of India, uttered over two thousand five hundred years ago. It reads as follows:

*Yo ce tam sahate jammim tanham loke duraccayam  
Soka tamha papatanti udabindu ' va pokkharā. Dhp. v.336*

Whoso in the world overcomes this base and unruly craving,  
From him sorrows fall away like water-drops from a lotus leaf.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## with Abbreviations

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 DN. Dīgha Nikāya PTS [Translation: Dialogues of the Buddha PTS]  
 DA. Digha Nikaya Commentary - Sumangalavilasini SHB  
 Dhp. Dhammapada ed. Narada Thera  
 DhpA. Dhammapadatthakatha PTS  
 Kh. Khuddakapāṭha PTS  
 KhA. Khuddakapatha Commentary PTS  
 K.S. Kindred Sayings - Samyutta Nikaya Translation PTS  
 MN. Majjhima Nikāya PTS [Translation: Middle Length Sayings P'TS]  
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 PsB. Psalms of the Brethren - Theragatha Translation by Mrs. Rhys Davids PTS  
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 SN. Samyutta Nikāya PTS [Translation: Kindred Sayings PTS]  
 SA. Samyutta Nikaya Commentary - Saratthappakasini SHB  
 SHB. Simon Hewavitarana Bequest Series [Sinhala script edition.]  
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 Thag. Theragāthā PTS  
 Thig. Therīgāthā PTS  
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**THE END**